WAR IMPRESSIONS BEING A RECORD IN COLOUR BY MORTIMER MENPES



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WAR IMPRESSIONS

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LORD ROBERTS IN HIS STUDY AT HEADQUARTERS,
BLOEMFONTEIN



WAR IMPRESSIONS
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To Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, V.C., K.G.

Preface

When my Father, home from the War, was showing to me the sketches he had made in South Africa, he told some interesting incident about almost every one of them; and it occurred to me that he was inadvertently providing material for a book. This volume is the result. I endeavoured to write down all he said; and I trust that what I have written is at least a faithful record. My skill in the Art of Letters is not nearly equal to my father's in the Graphic Art; yet I have done my best, and shall be well content if my share in this work is considered not altogether unworthy of the pictures, about which, surely, there can be no doubt at all!

DOROTHY MENPES.

London, *January* 1901.

Contents

CHAPTER I

PAGE

Sea and Veldt 1

CHAPTER II

On the Way to Orange River 11

CHAPTER III

The Veteran 23

CHAPTER IV

Kimberley Relieved 36

CHAPTER V

Story of a Cape Cart 47

CHAPTER VI

Lord Roberts 68

CHAPTER VII

Sir Alfred Milner 88

Contents

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

The Right Honourable Cecil Rhodes 101

CHAPTER IX

Personalities 119

CHAPTER X

Journalism in the Field 138

CHAPTER XI

Medicine in the Field 152

CHAPTER XII

Religion in the Field 162

CHAPTER XIII

The War and Philately 172

CHAPTER XIV

Tommy and his Officer 183

CHAPTER XV

The Enemy 198

CHAPTER XVI

Reflections on the Campaign 224

List of Illustrations

		FACING PAGE
1.	Lord Roberts in his Study at Headquarters, Bloemfontein	*Frontispiece*
2.	C.I.V. Camp near Cape Town	2
3.	Table Mountain—Early Morning	4
4.	Fish Market, Cape Town	6
5.	Sea Point	8
6.	Sir Alfred Milner and Staff inspecting C.I.V.	10
7.	Mule Waggons	12
8.	Little Afrikander	14
9.	Remounts	16
10.	The late Admiral Maxse	18
11.	Sea Point, Cape Town	20
12.	C.I.V. on the March	22
13.	Modder River—Early Morning	24
14.	Crossing the Modder	26
15.	At Jacobsdal	28
16.	On the Way to Kimberley	30
17.	Hon. Mrs. Rochfort Maguire	32
18.	Cecil J. Rhodes at Kimberley	34
19.	Kaffirs leaving Kimberley	40
20.	Lieut.-General Pole-Carew	42
21.	Pontoon-building at Klip Drift	44
22.	Tommy cooking—Klip Drift	48
23.	Major-General Wavell	50

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

24. Lieut.-Colonel Maxse 52
25. Transport in Difficulties 54
26. A 6-inch Gun in Difficulties 58
27. Orange Free State Farmhouse 62
28. In the Garden of the Convent, Bloemfontein . . 64
29. Lord Roberts's Headquarters, Aasvogel Kop . . 66
30. Lord Roberts 68
31. Lord Roberts—Head Study 70
32. Lord Roberts watching the Battle of Osfontein . . 72
33. Lord Roberts and Staff watching the Battle of Osfontein 74
34. Battle of Osfontein 76
35. Battle of Osfontein—Advance of Mounted Infantry and Artillery, as seen from Kopje occupied by Headquarters Staff and Naval Guns 78
36. Lord Roberts and Staff 80
37. Shoeing Lord Roberts's Horses 82
38. Departure of Cronje from Klip Drift 84
39. Lord Albemarle 86
40. Sir Alfred Milner 88
41. Sir Alfred Milner at his Desk 90
42. Mafeking Day at Cape Town 92
43. Sir Alfred Milner addressing an Audience on Mafeking Day 94
44. Sir Alfred Milner addressing an Audience at Government House, Cape Town 96
45. Sir Alfred Milner addressing an Audience . . . 98
46. Sir Alfred Milner and Staff 100
47. Cecil J. Rhodes. 102
48. Colonel Frank Rhodes 104
49. Cecil J. Rhodes at Groote Schuur 106
50. At Paarl 108
51. Cecil J. Rhodes in his Garden, Kenilworth, Kimberley. 110
52. Groote Schuur 112

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

53. Rhodes's Fruit Farm at Paarl 114
54. Dutch Farmhouse on Rhodes's Estates, Paarl . . 116
55. Rhodes's Farm 118
56. Duke of Norfolk 120
57. Rudyard Kipling 122
58. Winston Churchill 124
59. Lieut.-General Hector Macdonald 126
60. The Highlanders marching through Bloemfontein . 128
61. Lieut.-General French 130
62. Lieut.-General Pole-Carew in his Rose Garden at Bloemfontein 132
63. Major O'Meara 134
64. Lord Algernon Gordon Lennox 136
65. A Shelter at Ladysmith 138
66. Transport on the Way to Ladysmith 140
67. Near Ladysmith 144
68. Lieut.-General Hector Macdonald outside Bloemfontein 148
69. Winston Churchill as War Correspondent . . . 150
70. Dr. Conan Doyle 152
71. Burdett Coutts, M.P. 154
72. Red Cross Waggons 156
73. Boer Waggon commandeered and used by Red Cross . 158
74. On the Way to Ladysmith 164
75. Ladysmith 168
76. Bloemfontein—Evening 172
77. Evening 174
78. Bloemfontein Cemetery—Evening 178
79. Outspanning 184
80. Firing the 6-inch Guns 186
81. Mule Waggon in Difficulties 192
82. A Prisoner 194
83. A Garden at Bloemfontein 196

List of Illustrations

FACING PAGE

84. Boer Prisoners led into Klip Drift by C.I.V. . . 198
85. Evening at Klip Drift 200
86. Boer Prisoners on the Way from Paardeberg . . 202
87. Boer Prisoners 204
88. Boer Children 206
89. Boer Waggon left by Cronje in his Flight to Paardeberg 208
90. Boer Prisoners leaving Klip Drift 210
91. Dutch Village near Edenburg 214
92. Cronje and Major Albrecht 216
93. Driefontein 218
94. Boer Red Cross Nurses 222
95. Sir Alfred Milner inspecting C.I.V. 224
96. Duke of Marlborough 226
97. Prince Francis of Teck 228
98. Sir Alfred Milner interviewing Colonel Cholmondeley of the C.I.V. 230
99. New Zealand Mounted Rifles acting as Scouts . . 232

Facsimile Letters, Etc.

Letter from Earl Roberts to Mr. Mortimer Menpes, dated Johannesburg, 16th November 1900 239

Letter from Major-General J. D. P. French to Mr. Mortimer Menpes, dated Johannesburg, 8th December 1900 . 241

Letter from Brigadier-General Pole-Carew to Mr. Mortimer Menpes, dated Welbeck Abbey, 1st March 1901 . 243

Letter from Major-General Hector Macdonald to Mr. Mortimer Menpes, dated Springfontein, 29th November 1900 247

Letter from Dr. Steinmetz (a Boer doctor) to Major-General Hector Macdonald 249

Letter from Major-General Archibald Graham Wavell to Mr. Mortimer Menpes 251

A Boer Plan of the Battle of Magersfontein . *facing page* 254

WAR IMPRESSIONS

CHAPTER I

SEA AND VELDT

THE voyage to Cape Town was a typical voyage. We had the same concerts, the same sweepstakes, the same joys, the same bores: everything was familiar. The only interesting part of the day was tea-time. That was the hour of inspiration, talk, bustle. People warmed to one another; pens flew over paper; diaries were brought up to date. Generally I took tea with a naturalist and his wife, and, while they talked, sat dreamily watching the people pass. One man I noticed particularly, because he always sat at a little camp-table with head bent down, writing like the wind. He was a peer, and as I saw him throwing off page after page of foolscap I wondered what it was he found to write about with such energy and facility. It occurred to me that perhaps the blank sameness of the scene served in some subtle way to form a subject of interest. Perhaps the people passing up and down the deck, running into one another now and then through sheer

aimlessness—perhaps they were amusing. Often, out of pure idle curiosity, I would pull out my notebook and study the various passengers; searching for inspiration in a group of correspondents who were discussing their chances of getting to the front; in young officers with their noses glued to the Red Book; in a group of "dotty" gentlemen seeking for Government employ. There was one poor old soul who was always standing in the same spot gazing out to sea—an old man with shaking thumbs. He never spoke except on one theme —Lord Kitchener—"the worst pupil I ever had, a backward lad! a dunderhead, sir!" he always declared when questioned on the subject. And he still believed him a dunderhead, although he was on his way to crave a position as a "specialist" under the very backward pupil. Another man whose career I watched with some interest was carrying a letter from the editor of a leading morning newspaper to Mr. Rhodes. At that time Kimberley was not relieved. With dauntless courage this man had determined to break through the enemy's lines and deliver this letter, come what might. The whole boat heard of his intention to make this desperate dash at Kimberley, and we were all deeply interested in his vigorous morning walks round the deck, exercise taken in exactly the same way in which an athlete would train for a big race. For, as he used to tell us, it was necessary to get "hard" and in good condition, so as to be prepared at a given moment to leave his horse and "sprint" into Kimberley. "There is nothing like a good quarter-of-a-mile sprint to save a desperate situation,"



C.I.V. CAMP NEAR CAPE TOWN



he was wont to declare. Before leaving the boat and undertaking this daring feat, he bade a tender good-bye to his friends. When I arrived in Kimberley at the heels of General French, naturally the first man I looked for was our gallant young sprinter ; but by that time he was on his way as a prisoner to Pretoria—he had sprinted thither instead. I was struck with the number of old men we had on board. They were utterly regardless of the fact that South Africa was quite the last place for old men. They were terribly in the way, and they only ended in pottering about Cape Town and Bloemfontein,—probably catching enteric fever. It was pathetic to hear them boast of what they would do when they got to the front. The correspondents were just as many. Quite two-thirds of the passengers must have been composed of old men and correspondents all eager to get employment. Each was serenely confident ; but perhaps only two out of the scores we were carrying ever got to the front.

Then, there were the mounted C.I.V. under Colonel Cholmondeley, a fine body of men, who spent most of their time learning to ride on a wooden horse. The bulk of them seemed energetic and enthusiastic, although their inoculation for enteric fever and the heavy seas rather (to use a slang expression) "knocked the gilt off the gingerbread." From my seat at the naturalist's tea-table, these C.I.V. appeared to form a dun-coloured background which now and then became individualised into interesting characters. There was a celebrated physician, a man who had given up a practice at £2000

a year for the privilege of going out to the front to fight. Another owned his coach-and-four and a yacht at Cowes. But perhaps the character that stands out in highest relief, from the soldiers and passengers alike, was General Wavell. He was indeed a friend. Not a day passed without his spending several hours in educating me on military matters, and preparing me, as a correspondent, for my work in South Africa. Encountering many difficulties, I made many mistakes: if it had not been for his kind guidance at the beginning of my career, I should probably have made many more.

The journey to Cape Town was exceptionally uneventful. Practically nothing happened; no one ever did or said anything of interest. The only incident which in any way relieved the dulness was when we sighted a ship not far from Cape Town. She signalled to us that Ladysmith was relieved. This glorious news naturally caused a terrific excitement on board. Every one was thrown into a fever of patriotic emotion. A lady with literary tastes was inspired on the instant to compose a poem called "Ladysmith Relieved." Another passenger, an eccentric gentleman, apparently determined not to be outdone in originality, appeared at a fancy-dress ball that night as Ladysmith itself. He was rather late in appearing, for the costume was elaborate; and we were all assembled on the deck when he descended upon us in short skirts and pink roses as a lady, while carrying a hammer and tongs to represent the smith. Next day a committee was formed to edit the poem, and for three consecutive days neither lady

TABLE MOUNTAIN—EARLY MORNING



nor committee were seen: they were closeted in the smoking-room perfecting their gem, which, for the simple reason that they all had fingers in the pie, was considered by them to be a masterpiece. On the eve of its completion, however, we received from a passing vessel the news that Ladysmith was not relieved. The poem was put by for a future occasion, and the subject was silently dropped by the whole company. My last few days on board were spent in dreaming deliciously of the time to come: it seemed such a glorious life for an artist—to draw rations, pay nothing, and follow the army. Everything seemed joyous and rose-toned until I arrived in Cape Town; and then my troubles began. There I found myself absolutely at a loss. To my sorrow I learnt that the military were not going to help one to get to the front; in fact, they were going to hinder one, and rightly too. So I drifted about Cape Town, feeling hopeless. All I knew was that I was to represent *Black and White*, and that I intended to paint, if possible, a series of pictures for an exhibition. That was all I could be sure of. Everything else seemed precarious. For example, I was told that before I could proceed to the front it was necessary that I should obtain a traffic pass from the officer in charge of the lines of communication. Whither was I to go, and how was I to go? In my bewilderment I rushed off to a great friend, a lady occupying a prominent position in Cape Town. I felt sure that, if any one had power to help me, she had. She was the first friend I had met since my arrival;

and, glad to have a sympathetic listener, I poured all my troubles into her ear—how I proposed to go to the front, my difficulty in doing so, etc. For a minute or two she looked at me in silence, with slightly raised eyebrows, and then said, slowly and with great emphasis, "What made you come out to South Africa? This is not the place for an artist. This is not the moment for art. Things are far too grave and far too serious." Feebly I tried to explain that I was thoroughly aware of the gravity of the situation, but that I had come out to do a serious work, which, I thought, would not in any way harm the campaign. "No; but think!" she exclaimed, still unconvinced. "Picture to yourself the nuisance you will be at the front, in the way of all the generals,—naturally you will be altogether in the way, —and of course to call yourself a correspondent would be fatal, for then you would stand no chance at all." She strongly advised me to give up the idea of painting in South Africa. Much discouraged, I clung to my first ideas; and my friend, seeing my determination, eventually gave me a letter to a staff officer, thinking that he would probably be able to help me. Next day I presented the letter, and was immediately given a pass which would allow me to travel by rail as far as Modder River. By my request a few words were added which explained that I was to proceed until I came in touch with General Wavell, who, I knew, was helping me at the front, and was at that moment with Lord Methuen.

Luck seemed to be turning in my direction. Highly delighted, I set about preparing my outfit, for I was to

FISH MARKET, CAPE TOWN



start that very evening. I knew nothing of campaigning or of the articles necessary for it: so I bought no tent and no provisions. How I was to live on the veldt I knew not. I was green then, and knew little of such things. However, there was one thing I did have the wit to get. That was a helmet—the helmet of a field-marshal! It was white; but I painted it khaki, and the oil in the preparation produced an aged, battle-worn look which gave me the air of a warrior before I had started on my career. This helmet was my salvation. It carried me everywhere, commanded respect from every one, and procured privileges for me which I never should have obtained in any other way. I was allowed to stray about late at night unquestioned at the front; guards turned out to salute me; men made way for me; I did scores of things which to other correspondents (with ordinary felt hats) were forbidden. They would often take advantage of this influence, and say, "O, let Menpes go first with his helmet, and help us through." Besides my helmet I bought a khaki suit ready-made. There were three sizes. I chose what they called the medium size—that is, the trousers were medium, and the coat was O.S. (out size). Neither fitted, and both, being chain-stitched, began to come undone before I had had them on five minutes. They arrived at the eleventh hour, and consequently my toilette was hurried; but when I sallied forth at last with my weather-beaten helmet and elementary outfit, consisting of one portmanteau, the effect was simply magical. I was taken for a Field-Marshal

immediately! Every soldier I met saluted me, and every time I blushed and felt wretched. There were a whole group of men at the station to see me off, and I shall never forget the expression on their faces when I first appeared on the scene—they simply howled! "O, look at him," they cried, weak with laughing,—"look at the warrior!" for the change from the gentle artist they had known on the boat to the Field-Marshal was too much for their equanimity. The first and wisest thing I did was to go to the booking office, put my head in at the ticket hole—helmet and all, though they did not seem impressed by it,—and ask for a ticket to Modder River available for three months, thinking that by then my work would be completed. No sooner had I paid my £12 than I learned that correspondents were allowed the privilege of travelling free of charge.

This discouraged me considerably; but, once started on my journey, I soon forgot all my troubles—my khaki clothes, my warrior helmet, my wasted £12. The war itself was absolutely lost as I turned to revel in the glorious scenery that was continually passing before my eyes. As one looked out of the carriage window at mid-day, when the sun was at its zenith, the landscape appeared to be more or less of the colour which is described as khaki; but after a violent downpour, which left the veldt one sheet of water, the scene was changed from dull gold to a sweep of deep rich purple. So the colours changed continually at sunrise, at sunset, in shadow and in shine, and with such extraordinary



SEA POINT



rapidity that within the hour there were a dozen violent changes in effect. I have heard this scenery described by unthinking strangers as monotonous; but to me the so-called monotony served to give value to the exquisite colour changes that were continual. One of the chief characteristics of this particular part of South Africa is the sameness of the drawing but the infinite variety of the colour changes. Still, there is one point of similarity in these scenes, however violent the contrast; and that is that the colouring is always cool and silvery. Even the little Dutch farms we passed —the little farms that always seem to form a part of the South African landscape—were white with brilliant touches of cool spring green in the shutters; the warm tones in the sky at sunset inclined rather to the rose than the vermilion.

This was my first glimpse of the veldt—the veldt that has never been described, and never will be described, because it is indescribable. Although I had not lived on it, it exercised a strange subtle influence over me that I could not account for—it may have been its vastness or its beauty,—I cannot tell: I only know that it took possession of me, that it filled me with a sensation of joy and greatness, and made me feel a better and bigger man. In its vastness and grand simplicity it impresses you very much as the first sight of the Sphinx does; and this impression, after living for four months on the veldt, changed not but grew stronger. Now that my journey is over and I look back upon those months spent on the veldt, I cannot

help thinking of how little men who have not lived in the country, or have not seen the veldt, can realise the tremendous influence it has upon the people, and how utterly impossible it would be to attempt to pacify and govern the two republics without a thorough knowledge of the conditions under which their inhabitants live. It is impossible to ignore the influence of the veldt. It simply will not be ignored. It draws men together, however antagonistic they may be; wherever they may meet elsewhere, they will always be attracted in the same way.



SIR ALFRED MILNER AND STAFF INSPECTING C.I.V.



CHAPTER II

ON THE WAY TO ORANGE RIVER

I WAS dreamily gazing at the glorious landscape and watching the curious effect of a line of kopjes in sun and shade—how, when the sun came out, they appeared to be many miles away ; how, when the sun went in, they were outlined crisply and clearly against the sky—so clearly that they appeared to come close up to the carriage window—when, harshly breaking in upon my dreams, I heard a voice, "What are you going to do about water?" followed by a laugh. I looked round annoyed, and saw a stout man sitting opposite to me shaking with suppressed laughter, and repeating his inane question, "What are you going to do about water?" "Water!" I said, rather testily,—"water? I don't understand." "Well, what are you going to drink? Where are your water bags?" And he looked scornfully at the scores of small parcels connected with my painting paraphernalia that were scattered round me. I told him that I had not any water bags. "But you can't do without water bags. They're absolutely necessary. You can do without khaki ; but you can't

do without a water bag." And he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

This was awkward. I had no water bags. "And your Cape cart and horses?" piped a little man in the corner,—"where are they? But perhaps you can do without them; you may have some artistic way of your own for covering the ground." I assured them that I had not. I begged that they would tell me everything that was necessary for an experienced campaigner, as I did not wish to be considered an amateur. The lists they gave me almost filled an entire pocket-book, until, by the time I reached Orange River, I began to feel that I should like to go back to Cape Town and fit myself out with the necessary articles. However, my opportunity came sooner than I thought.

When we arrived at Orange River, a young staff officer demanded to see our passes. I showed him mine, and he promptly ordered me to return by the next train, which left within two hours. He was harsh, unnecessarily harsh; and technically he was wrong. I was in despair; but, realising that I was to return almost immediately, I was determined to make the most of my time, and began preparing to paint a scene of rare beauty just outside the station. Teams of mules were passing to and fro, throwing up warm grey dust that appeared opalescent in the rays of the dying sun. Officers were dining in their shirt-sleeves outside the railway canteen. Groups of gaily-dressed Kaffir children and dusty "Tommies" formed an appreciative audience to a military band that was playing selections



MULE WAGGONS



from "The Belle of New York." As night came on and the scene purpled, becoming deeper in tone every moment, you began to see little lights peeping up here and there, until the camp looked like a great city. It was a glorious scene, exquisite in colour. I longed to paint it; but I was not permitted, as I should be interfering with the military situation. My friend the little staff officer would not allow it. I tried to explain to him that I had no designs upon the military situation at all, but was only a gentle artist whose sole ambition was to take home to England a colour record of the war, and that now it lay in his power to have the privilege of really helping me. He would not look at matters from this point of view. The little authority that he had just received he was going to use to the full. He was a type of officer of which I have seen many specimens in South Africa—young, rather good-looking, inflated with imaginary power, and displaying the overbearing manner which always disappears by the time they become majors. This little gentleman was tickled to death at the idea of checking the career of a painter, and watched the train out of the station with something like a beam of satisfaction. I myself, engrossed once more with the glorious veldt, soon forgot my troubles in delicious dreams. All along the line from Orange River to Cape Town there were detachments of Colonial Volunteers guarding the railway, and I could not help thinking how sensible it would be if the authorities would only make use of these local men as scouts.

I met a great many local men on this journey,

nearly all officers belonging to the Commissariat department, and various irregular troops. I tried to gain as much knowledge from these people as possible. Soon I learnt that they all had a very high appreciation of Tommy, whom they declared to be a splendid fellow; but they were not so unanimous, I noticed, in their praise of the English officer—that is, of a certain type of English officer, of whose overbearing manner and incapacity to adapt himself they complained bitterly. I was bound to admit that two of our travelling companions were rather glaring examples of this particular type. They were two Artillery officers who, it occurred to me, were rather too finicking in their personal luggage and railway comforts. They had telegraphed already to De Aar to say that they were coming; but, to their great wrath, they found that the passenger train had already started, and that they would have to wait until next day before we could start again, making a delay altogether of four hours. Then these officers began to fume. They abused the stationmaster because he had not upset the whole arrangement of traffic to suit their little whim. They attacked the railway officials. They attacked every one. Then they came back, and flung themselves on their cushions, tired out with their exertions; and one, evidently a senior officer, said to his companion, "Now, what the —— are we to do? We have only got Maggi—Burgundy and biscuits—and we have four hours to wait. This is roughing it indeed!" I could have laughed aloud as I said to myself, "You two poor dears! and you call this roughing it?" A colonial



LITTLE AFRIKANDER



officer sitting next to me overheard this little conversation, and I saw him raise his eyebrows, evidently thinking, "Why, I call that a banquet!" He was a splendid fellow, in the pink of condition, with not an ounce of unnecessary flesh on him. He had the air of a man capable of doing anything. "That's the worst of your regular officers," he said to me in an undertone. "They imagine they are roughing it when they are really having the best of food. Those fellows have never roughed it. They take a lackadaisical, Piccadilly view of the war and regard the whole business as a beastly bore. We are fighting for our families and for our homes, and know what it all means. The British officer has so much of this stand-off manner and want of adaptability that he misses a mass of information which is ready at hand—which only we Colonials can give them." Although I did not agree with my friend entirely, I could not help admitting that some of his statements were perfectly true.

On this journey we had some time to wait at a station called Beaufort West. Another correspondent and I took the opportunity of looking over the court house and the local prison. To our disgust, all conversational business was carried on in Dutch. It is rather discouraging when one thinks that we have been in the country for over a hundred years and Dutch is still the language spoken in court. The prisoner was a Kaffir charged with having "sharped" a Hottentot. In my opinion he was worthy of the gravest punishment. He had meanly taken the opportunity of showing his

country friend about town, to take him to the house of an accomplice, where the poor man had been robbed of all his clothing and three bottles of whisky. From the court house we went on to the prison—a beautifully-kept place looking more like a farm than a gaol. The gaoler showed us a collection of prisoners—the most disreputable specimens of humanity I have ever seen—except one old man, who looked quite respectable. I was attracted by his face, and asked the gaoler who he was. "O! he's to be hanged to-morrow for murder," the gaoler answered.

We had in the train two or three hundred Fingoes who were travelling to Stellenbosch to work at the Remount Depot, and I was greatly struck with their costumes. I never saw such a series of surprises. One man would be wearing a macintosh and a top-hat; another a frock-coat and a pair of gaiters—nothing else; and I noticed one old gentleman with a pair of cricketing trousers and an evening-dress waistcoat. But what struck me the most was their chief. I never saw such a superb creature—six foot six, with the bearing of a born leader. He was a well-known chief. I watched him from the carriage window, and it was quite splendid to see the kingly way in which he marshalled his men. Just before the train started I saw him buy a bottle of whisky and half drink it at one draught without being in the least affected by it. This was a five days' journey from Orange River to Cape Town; but it seemed so useless that the five days were more like five months, and by the time that I had reached Cape Town I had

REMOUNTS



worked myself into a state of hopeless dejection. I went straight to my friend, and told her of my wasted journey. "Now, isn't that interesting?" she exclaimed. "How rapidly you are seeing the country!"

Cape Town at that time was loathsome, filled as it was with heartless Society butterflies—ladies overdressed and not over-pretty either, who, although it may seem indelicate to suggest it, were receiving more attention than they could possibly hope to do in the whirl of many London seasons. The dinner-parties given to silly young staff officers—the giggling, the tittering—all seemed terribly incongruous in the midst of so much suffering and hard work. The war with its shadows was, as it were, a blaze of limelight that showed these people in all their crude insipidity. To me as a painter it was appalling. I found myself in a frivolous atmosphere, but in a clear white searching light that showed every atom of falseness and make-believe, and (to say the least) it was not decorative. Middle-aged women who in London would have seemed quite passable here in this glorious light appeared tawdry and artificial. Never before have I seen the sham side of life and the real side of life brought so close together and in such glaring contrast. South Africa was not the place for such women. It was only the place for hard workers—for the women whom the doctors call angels, whose work will live for ever in the minds of thousands of men. These are the women we wanted, and there were not nearly enough of them. I have heard many Society women, thinking that they would like to do a little

work, say, "O! I love nursing," and then go pottering about the wards in flounces and furbelows, hindering the nurses and irritating the patients. All this was wrong, and should not have been allowed. If there is ever another big war, a good deal of attention, I should think, will be paid to the keeping back of Society women. Fathers and brothers would have been much better without having about them their womenfolk, who were always in the way, always out of place, and apparently hopelessly incapable of appreciating the terrible solemnity of the scenes they witnessed. They treated the campaign as though it were a circus, and they were only a hindrance to the authorities. I was talking to an officer about this great trouble, and he said, earnestly, "Yes: indeed, indeed, they are a nuisance." Then he told me a string of stories of how these women pestered him for information, which, he knew, they only needed to gibber out at some dinner-party at the Mount Nelson Hotel. Only that morning, he said, a poor dear lady had come to him and demanded that he should enlarge on some despatch which Lord Roberts had just published: her husband, she said, had an official position at the front, and she was entitled to know. "What was I to do?" he asked. "I was bound to tell her a fearful cock-and-bull story. I tell 'em all day long, and I am sure that by evening every one in Cape Town will hear of it"; and sure enough, I heard it myself. Not only did these women do no good: they did a great deal of harm also, for with their gay dinner-parties they enticed young officers to

THE LATE ADMIRAL MAXSE



neglect their work ; and whenever I saw a staff officer at a dinner-party, or lounging about at the Mount Nelson Hotel, somehow I resented it, and felt that he should be swept out of the place and be given healthy work to do,—there is a certain type of staff officer who thinks far more of his complexion, of cultivating an affected voice, and of the little bit of gold that decorates his khaki, than of his immediate duties.

So I wandered about Cape Town disgusted with the atmosphere of the place, dejected by the failure of my own plans, until I suddenly came across my dear friend, Admiral Maxse. He was my salvation. In a remarkably short time I found myself provided with proper licenses and passes, which stated that I was to be allowed to travel anywhere with Lord Roberts's column. I was first introduced to Major Bagot, censor at Cape Town, who sent a long telegram to Lord Stanley, press censor at the front with Lord Roberts, explaining my position, and stating that I was the chief representative of *Black and White*—he himself had no power to allow me to proceed, because Lord Stanley had taken the book of passes away with him. Lord Stanley answered, "Menpes can go anywhere ; I have his pass." This was delightful, and from that moment I found not the slightest difficulty or hindrance—as far, at all events, as passes were concerned.

The next thing was to prepare my outfit. I had reason to bless my journey to Orange River, for I had

gained a pretty keen insight into the work that lay before me, and by referring to my pocket-book I knew exactly what to take. During my wanderings about Cape Town, I came across another correspondent representing an illustrated paper, and as we were both in very much the same plight—he was just as much a lamb as I—we agreed to travel together. It was our fixed opinion in the first place that correspondents always shared tents with the generals; indeed, judging from the descriptions these gentlemen had given of their experiences in other campaigns, I had gathered that they were always nursed by the army at the front. This, I soon found, was not the case; and I was told that it was absolutely necessary to take an outfit, tinned food, and suitable clothing with you. One had to buy a whole series of things; everything was at famine price, and some necessaries were almost impossible to get. The first and most important item on the list was a shelter tent. All day I searched for one; but I could not get anything made in Cape Town for love or money. I went to a little tent-maker; but he shook his head directly he saw me, and said, "I know what you want, sir. You want a tent made; but it's no good. I have got ten thousand flags to make in two days, and I have more work on hand already than I can well do." But at last, by great good luck, I found one—the last shelter tent to be bought in Cape Town. That tent was a perfect treasure and the envy of every one. I might have sold it over and over again for very large sums at the front; but it was worth far

SEA POINT, CAPE TOWN



more than gold to me just then. In two days everything was arranged, and with a good stock of Maggi we started off on our second journey. Nothing in the world is equal to Maggi, and I very soon learnt the value of it ; also that by tipping the engine-driver hot water could be got at any moment ; and this Maggi was my chief refreshment on the way, drunk out of a canvas cup which I found to be one of the most useful things I had bought.

Among our fellow-passengers were two rather interesting characters, a dissenting minister and a dental surgeon. The minister was a rather economical gentleman, but with great habits of the world and human nature. He was continually trying to impress us with this power of his, and at one of the stations on the way an admirable opportunity presented itself for drawing it into play. There was a tremendous excitement going on. A correspondent was explaining to an excited crowd how Jacobsdal had been burnt to the ground. The description was simply splendid. You could picture the burning houses and the daring rescues, in which he figured largely ; in fact, he had barely escaped with his life, he told his admiring audience He was just collecting money for these poor destitute people when an Australian stepped up and said, "This man lies : Jacobsdal is not burnt!" It was now the parson's duty to interfere, and, with his great habit of the world, to find out the truth. He interviewed both men, and listened to their stories. "Now," he said, "I am a minister, and it has been my habit to study

faces. Look at the noble, frank, open countenance of the correspondent, and tell me if he is telling the truth. Of course it is obvious that he is, and it is just as obvious that the Australian is telling a lie." Such was our faith in the parson, we did not doubt his judgment for one instant; but at the next stopping-place we learnt that the gentleman with the frank expression was an impostor, and that the Chapel had gone astray. The dental surgeon also was an interesting character until he suddenly gave us some information that blotted out the beautiful scenery for us, and made life a blank wilderness, by making one simple remark. "Do you know? I heard of one man who was fool enough to suppose that he could get his Cape cart and horses at the front. He probably thought there was a livery stable at Orange River. Of course he had to go back to Cape Town. Did you ever hear anything so green?" I smiled, and said I thought I never had; but I looked at my companion and he looked at me, and during the rest of that journey we suffered agony. We were not (to say the least of it) communicative.



C.I.V. ON THE MARCH



CHAPTER III

THE VETERAN

ARRIVED at Orange River, we immediately set to work to pitch our tents—a work of no difficulty whatever; but this was the first time we had ever done it, and we were amazingly faddy. A picturesque position seemed to me to be necessary: in fact, it should be an ideal position in relation to trees, ground, view—everything. For hours I wandered from point to point undecided which spot to choose; my friend followed, lugging the outfit after me. And it was difficult to choose. A situation, with hills in the distance, which looked divine, was perhaps too bumpy, marshy, or unsheltered, from the practical standpoint. At last we found a spot which appeared to combine both advantages, and pitched our tents so securely and fastidiously that any one would have thought we intended to take up our permanent abode there.

When it was all in apple-pie order we started for the station, and on the way ran straight into the arms of—joy of joys!—a correspondent. He was Mr. Blank, and we felt directly we saw him that our

difficulties were over: his very being inspired us with confidence. He shook hands with me, and told me that he had heard of my name,—I swelled with pride: I was amazed to think that this great Mr. Blank should have heard of me. I told him of all our troubles, and begged that he would help us and give us some advice. "Well, there is only one way of travelling, and that is by Cape cart," he declared; "and the only way of getting the horses and the Cape cart is through me." This seemed encouraging. "I am an old campaigner, and there are three things you must learn before you can succeed. They are most essential, and you will find that they will be of the greatest service to you. First, never be in a hurry; second, always drink from your water-bottle; third, never be too proud to accept anything from anybody." We digested the Veteran's remarks, and followed him while we searched the whole camp for the Cape cart and horses. In the end he secured a Cape cart and two horses, with a small boy thrown in, at the rate of £3 a day. We were to go shares in this outfit, and the Veteran suggested that we should start almost immediately for Jacobsdal. Suddenly a difficulty arose concerning our passes; and the Veteran left us for a moment to speak to the censor, Major Streatfeild, while we timidly stepped on one side, trusting to his influence to set matters right. After talking for half an hour, however, it appeared that the Veteran had not arranged anything: so I boldly took the matter into my own hands and talked to

MODDER RIVER—EARLY MORNING



the censor myself. "O! you're all right," he said directly he saw me. "Lord Stanley has given me instructions to help you whenever I came across you." "But my companions," I asked,—"what about them?" He said he could not answer for my companions, but consented to heliograph to Lord Roberts for permission for all three of us to proceed. The answer was, "Menpes and Blank may proceed." Then we were in a hole about the third member of the party; but, as he insisted on coming with us, he simply came, and we said no more about him.

That journey was one long series of misfortunes. First of all, we started by hanging our new water-bags, filled with good drinking water, on the outside of our Cape cart; and later, in crossing a drift of the Modder, they were naturally jolted off—all but two, which happened to have been tied on with string. The only possible way of crossing this stream was to leave Cape cart and horses and spring from stone to stone. My companion and I got over very quickly; but when we turned round to see what the Veteran was doing, we found that he was trying a different scheme altogether—a scheme of his own that necessitated rather strained and awkward positions. Now he was kneeling on a large stone in the middle of the stream, meditating a crawl to the other. The fingers of one hand were stretched out imploringly, but reached no farther than four inches from the tantalising stone ahead. Soon, missing the aim, he was plunged knee-deep in the water; and then, giving up the crawling act, he simply

ploughed through to the other side. The spectacle, though painful, was humorous, and peals of laughter came from our side of the bank. My companion quickly seized the poor Veteran's unfortunate plight as a splendid "subject" for his paper, and it was by main force that I had to prevent him from taking the mean advantage of photographing him.

We arrived in Jacobsdal just in time for luncheon, and General Wavell very generously presented us with the last bottle of beer that was to be had in the place. Lord Roberts and the headquarters staff were stationed here, and I anticipated many interesting sketches of the Commander-in-Chief and his staff, until the Veteran began to get ideas. He was always getting ideas; in which respect he reminded me of the famous School of Impressionist Painters, who were always on the verge of great discoveries. Luncheon was scarcely over when the Veteran had an idea that we ought to be off on the instant. There was not a moment to lose, no matter if the horses were worn out, nor that this was a splendid moment to sketch Lord Roberts —a better one was coming, and we must push on to Kimberley. "For," he whispered dramatically, "Lord Roberts and his staff are to start off there at daybreak. We must be there before them—we must be on the spot." How well I got to know this "on the spot" as a matter of painful fact! We were never on any spot but the wrong one, for whenever a situation began to be interesting there was always something else a few miles off of far greater importance that was not to be

CROSSING THE MODDER



missed. I knew that it would be useless to ask the General any questions concerning this sudden decision of Lord Roberts to visit Kimberley. I was sure that he would not be in the position to answer me; but I told him what the Veteran had told me. To my amazement, he showed no surprise at all, but merely ejaculated "Really!" as he passed on his way. I thought I saw a smile; but I was mistaken, for he turned round and said, very gravely, "But you must be careful: there is danger in travelling unguarded about here just now."

This ought to have been warning enough for me to stay in Jacobsdal; but I looked up to the Veteran as a sort of god, and after he had said, "Come! we must go off at once to Kimberley—Lord Roberts will be there," I never questioned him for one moment. The Veteran bought, as provision for this journey, one tin of sausages, and was heard to remark in a very pointed way that he could always tell a man who had habits of campaigning, because he invariably carried sausages with him wherever he went. So Mr. Scott and I instantly swamped the cart with tinned sausages. They cost exorbitant sums, and we threw them overboard during the march. Thus equipped, we were ready to start; but our horses could not be got to move. We were comfortably seated in the cart, sausages and all, and were anxious to drive off in style; but our poor jaded beasts would not, or rather could not, stir. We pulled and we pushed; we tried running along by the side, and then jumping up; but all these athletic schemes

failed, and I don't know what we should have done if it had not been for the help of General Wavell and his staff. With his usual ability, the General grasped the situation instantly, and said, "Now, look here: you get into the cart, and I'll push you off." He called together the members of his staff, and they gave us a vigorous send-off, which started us at quite a brisk trot on our way towards Kimberley. "Excellent!" I heard the Veteran mutter to himself as we drove away. "Pushed off by a General, eh!" I said to myself, "He's thinking of that from a platform standpoint." We hoped to reach Kimberley that night; but after our brave little start the horses began to slow down to almost a walk, and our chances of doing so grew fainter and fainter. But still we jogged on and on, until the sun went down and night came on. We were at the mercy of our little Kaffir driver, aged eight; and none of us dared speak to him, lest he should become demoralised and direct our horses straight into the Boer lines. He seemed to drive very confidently, and we all hung our hopes on his powers; but as it was getting on towards midnight and we had not arrived, we began to feel very nervous indeed. One of the party went so far as to consult his compass, and, finding that it did not work, he fell to cross-questioning the boy, and soon discovered that he had not the faintest idea whither he was going or where he was.

At the critical moment the Kimberley search light flashed out, and by it we guessed that we must be



AT JACOBSDAL



many miles from there. This friendly light shone on us for a few moments, and then went out, leaving us in pitch darkness. There were no platform scenes then. In fact, we were all very natural and very chatty, while each one thought of the best way out of the difficulty. We all depended on the Veteran. He was an old campaigner, and always superintended everything. Besides, it was his trip. We all had unlimited faith in his powers, and now waited anxiously for his next move. I remember that scene so well—the Cape cart with its drooping horses; the Veteran standing in a pensive attitude with arms folded, surrounded by Mr. Scott, the Kaffir boy, and myself, all hungry and dishevelled, hanging upon our leader's every movement with wide-open eyes. Suddenly an idea flashed across the colossal brain. With a commanding gesture he waved us on one side, drew a box of wax matches from his pocket, and began slowly striking them, one by one, holding the tiny flame aloft each time to inspect the few square yards of veldt that they lit up. He went on with this performance until the stock of matches was exhausted; then he dropped his arms with a blank expression, looked us full in the face, and said, "Now, what shall we do next?" Next! What had we done? "I was just going to ask you, for I have no habits of the veldt, and I am clinging to your great knowledge," I told him. The Veteran questioned the small boy, who promptly informed us that we were well within the Boer lines—that, in fact, the Boers were thick about here—and he kindly pointed

out their camp fires, looking like tiny specks in the distance. After that there was a blank, and nothing was said; but the Veteran very quickly crept under the cart, rolled himself up in a rug, and, I presume, went to sleep.

We slept on the ground on either side. Then things were as they should be—we on the veldt, the Veteran under the cart—the Veteran! We slept soundly, nevertheless, and woke up early next morning, with a terrible day confronting us. The horses were not one whit refreshed, and directly they were harnessed began to drag fearfully. My friend and I walked, and at last things became so desperate that the Veteran was obliged to get out. But even the light cart was almost more than the poor creatures could carry, and they began to lean on one another pathetically.

Things were becoming desperate when, within three miles of Kimberley, we passed a farmer who had dashed out directly the town was relieved, to get food for his starving family. I can see him now jolting along in his little light cart with a sheep's head dangling out at the back, and I can remember the joy with which we watched his advance. The Veteran stood in the middle of the road in a commanding attitude, with two fingers uplifted like a mediæval bishop's in the act of blessing, and as the farmer approached he shouted "Hold!" and the farmer halted. "I am Mr. Blank,"—Napoleon could not have said it better: he looked a splendid figure standing there, and we were proud of him. "I am Mr. Blank," he repeated, "travelling to Kimberley.



ON THE WAY TO KIMBERLEY



My horses are finished. Can you take us on?" The farmer said that there was only room for one. "Well, then, so it must be." "O! but you're surely not going to leave us like this?" I exclaimed. "My friend!" said the Veteran dramatically, "I must: it is necessary that I should send you help," and with great rapidity he ran back to the cart and took out a little handbag. "Look here," I said: "you're taking material for work. You must not do that, for I cannot allow your paper to get the better of *Black and White*." "O dear, dear no," he said with a smile: "I should not dream of it! All I want is to send you help," and with unusual alertness he sprang into the cart and drove off. But—deluded idiots!—we waited in vain. The Veteran never sent us help, and we had to pull the cart bodily into Kimberley, stopping every other moment to rest our horses, which were practically dead.

When we were two miles from Kimberley, we went through the most unpleasant ten minutes I have ever experienced. We were walking on ahead while the horses were resting, and were talking of the probability or improbability of the Veteran coming to our aid, when we noticed two or three heads pop up from a kopje just in front of us. "Boers!" we both said in one breath. We were alone on the veldt; the enemy we knew to be about here; and it was altogether a sensation. There was only one thing to do; that was to walk straight ahead and try to forget we had seen them, for our cart would not help us. A moment afterwards three of these heads we had seen stood up;

or, rather, the men stood up, and began walking down the kopje and over the veldt towards us—that was not a pretty moment! "We must put on a bold front and treat these Boers exactly as you would drunken men, and show no fear," I said to my companion. That was my main idea; and, curiously enough, I was not in the least bit frightened, for I felt as if I was in a dream, and was so buoyed up with the excitement that I felt almost elated. I kept muttering to myself, "Is it that I don't realise the danger?" as we strode forward to meet them—for I knew it was impossible for them to shoot us or do anything eccentric of that kind if we walked straight up to them. But they were ugly fellows, with slouched hats and guns; and soon, as they began to run towards us, I said to my companion, "This means Pretoria." They came right up to us, and held out their hands. "We are the Kimberley Town Guard," they said, "and we are out looting: have you seen anything?" The reaction was tremendous. What splendid fellows they seemed! I could have told them, or given them, any mortal thing. Seen anything? I should think we had! I described a rather nice horse we had passed on the way. They thanked us with a few rough words, and were off again like a shot.

I remember telling this story to a correspondent not many hours after the incident. A few weeks ago I heard him telling the same story from the platform to a very large audience, but as happening to himself, and, although it had naturally become a little distorted

HON. MRS. ROCHFORT MAGUIRE



with use, it sounded very well indeed. "I suddenly found myself confronted by three unkempt, fierce-looking men. They were the enemy! I walked straight towards them, staring them in the face, and, I may truthfully add, feeling no fear. I drew so near to them that I could actually look down the gleaming barrels of their rifles, which they presented full at me. I saw distinctly their fingers on the trigger at half pressure. Suddenly one of them made a remark—I recognised the dear old dialect of Suffolk. They were our own Tommies! God bless Tommy!" Here he thrust his arm dramatically in his chest. I was amazed!

With tremendous exertion, we pulled our cart and horses into Kimberley. We were filthily dirty and very thirsty; but we made straight for Mr. Rhodes's Sanatorium, where we were very hospitably welcomed. They gave us a huge glass of lime juice. I never tasted anything so delicious in my life. It was heavenly —cold, icy—but I cannot describe the glorious sensation of that drink.

Mr. Rhodes was delightful to us, and begged that we would stay on to luncheon. He fascinated me immediately; and we were having a very interesting conversation when suddenly I drew in my breath with a gasp, for there, through the glass of the conservatory, I saw the glorified vision of the Veteran—the Veteran cleaned up and smartened—in earnest conversation with Mrs. Maguire. Then it suddenly dawned upon me that he, the god of my idolatry, had stolen a march upon me, and had actually got ahead of *Black*

and White. "Ah, yes," I said half aloud: "I'm no good in the campaign. I can't compete with that correspondent: here is Mr. —— getting ahead of me already." Mr. Rhodes smiled, and asked in what respect Mr. —— was getting ahead of me. Then I told him the whole story—how I was only just starting on my career as a war artist; all about our journey; and how the Veteran had left us in order to go ahead and sketch Lord Roberts. "Lord Roberts!" Mr. Rhodes said in amazement. "He certainly is not sketching Lord Roberts here. He would have to go back to Jacobsdal to do that." "Then perhaps it is you he is sketching?" I asked. Mr. Rhodes assured me that it was nothing of the kind. We all stayed to luncheon, and the Veteran sat opposite to me at the table. He seemed to avoid my eyes, and during a lull in the conversation I heard him say, in a very slow tone of voice, "Ah, now I am better!" "Better?" I murmured,—"better?" "O yes," explained Mrs. Maguire: "this gentleman was rather ill; he seemed, in fact, as though he was going to have a touch of fever." "Well, I can quite understand why the Veteran is so much better," I said in a distinct tone of voice, addressing Mr. Rhodes and the whole table. "He was doing a smart, keen journalistic act when he left us in the lurch; but when he arrived here he must have been suffering agony, for he could not tell whether we should ever arrive or not. The very fact of seeing me was evidently enough to sweep away this fever: he is himself, and more!" I had a little conversation



C. J. RHODES AT KIMBERLEY



after luncheon in the hall with the Veteran. He came up to me, and said, very anxiously, "O, by the way, please don't talk like that before people. I don't like it. And then you said it with such a serious face that they'll think you meant it." "But I am serious; and not only serious, but hurt," I said. "Ah, but you don't understand!" exclaimed the Veteran. "You must remember that you are a journalist, and as journalists we are opponents." Then I explained that we were travelling together as friends, sharing the same cart, and that it really seemed hardly a gentlemanlike act to try and get the better of me. "Nevertheless," he said, "we were journalists. If we had not been, you would have had every right to condemn my conduct as ungentlemanlike." "Heavens!" I cried, "is it not possible to be a journalist and a gentleman at the same time? Is it always necessary to get ahead of one's friends?" Then I reminded him that all that fever and rush of his were in the end of no use to him, for he was really running away from Lord Roberts, who was in Jacobsdal. To illustrate my meaning, I told him the story about the gentleman of whom, I think, Solomon talks—who was always in such a hurry, but invariably found himself so much farther behind. Then I left the Veteran to digest my remarks.

CHAPTER IV

KIMBERLEY RELIEVED

THAT first luncheon in the Sanatorium was very gorgeous. We had chicken and champagne and butter and all sorts of unheard-of luxuries. Kimberley, in fact, seemed rather a pleasant place. Mr. Rhodes was kindness itself. Through his influence we secured a room in the Kimberley Club, next to Colonel Kekewich, at a time when the most difficult thing in the world was to get a lodging. Everything seemed to me to be quite flourishing, and in good condition. I saw no destroyed walls or houses. I even failed to see the hungry, strained look in the eyes of the inhabitants which was so vividly described by the correspondents. Kimberley seemed to me to be a splendid place—until I had my first meal at the Club. Then my ideas underwent a change. I found myself eating mule, and discovered my coffee to be made of burnt acorns and mealies. The chickens that I was eating at Mr. Rhodes's luncheon, I was told, he had bought at the beginning of the siege for £5 apiece; the eggs at £1 per dozen; and the butter was worth its weight in

gold—no wonder things seemed festive! Meals at the Club were different, although we possessed a genius of a cook. In fact, he was a colossal genius! All through the siege he kept things going, and manufactured the most gorgeous dishes out of practically nothing at all. Everything was "siege"—"siege cake," "siege pudding," and, above all, the famous "siege soup," of which he was the proud inventor. To be sure, there were changes in the soups from day to day, and the dishes were continually taking on different aspects; but we thought of our food only from the decorative standpoint, never asked questions, and in that way managed to enjoy it. One of the first things I did was to go to the barber, and while he was cutting my hair I asked him the usual question, "Well, how did you stand the siege?" "Splendid, sir; but you should have seen my customers! As soon as they heard the bell ring they would bolt under the chair here, or under the counter. But not I—I wasn't afraid excepting when 'Long Tom' fired. Then, I can tell you, sir, I joined my customers under the counter."

The chief topic of conversation in Kimberley was "Long Tom," the hundred-pound gun, and its effects. No one seemed ashamed to admit that he was affected by it. Even Mr. Rhodes himself told me that it was fearful: it would be an affectation, he said, to ignore the effect it produced upon one. I was told that it was sometimes very amusing, when the bugle sounded for "Long Tom," to see the way every one in the

streets—men and women, butchers, bakers, processions —every man jack of them, fell flat, and there would probably be not a man left standing in Kimberley.

They say that the Boers during the siege knew everything that was going on in the town, because the place was so full of rebels ; and they would often heliograph the password of the night before, to show their power of gathering information. All sorts of frivolous, insulting messages were heliographed also. One was that they were bored, and would we send some beautiful ladies out to entertain them—they would prefer French ones to English? When the first shot fired from "Long Tom" killed the engineer who had designed "Long Cecil" there was great rejoicing among the enemy. They considered it to be a sign from Heaven that God was with them. The children in Kimberley suffered most. In one day there were thirteen funerals of children alone ; for the enemy, because of their hatred of Mr. Rhodes, showed great cruelty in firing on groups of women and children in Kenilworth.

I stayed in Kimberley for a fortnight. During all that time the atmosphere seemed charged with electricity. Indeed, it was a terrible strain. You felt that there were feuds going on all the while between the military and the civil authorities. They did not work together ; they were antagonistic ; it was the fault of both. I was continually hearing the local men in the various clubs talking very bitterly of the military men. They seemed to resent their attitude as being too cocksure. At the beginning of the campaign the soldiers were rather

inclined to talk of the enemy slightingly, as though they were children, and would smile at the bare idea of them showing any opposition. This irritated the local men, who naturally knew to a nicety what a powerful force we had to contend with. An officer would say, "You wait until we begin to fire upon them with our artillery. Why, they'll scoot like a lot of baboons!" But by the time they had been locked up in Kimberley for a few days our troops altered their tone, and found, to their cost, that they had something more than baboons to deal with. That was the one great mistake—the mistake that no amount of experience, no number of disasters and "regrettable occurrences" have been able to eradicate. The military underrated the enemy. Then, of course, another bone of contention was Mr. Rhodes and Colonel Kekewich, both able men doing superb work, yet each hindering the other. The inhabitants would have starved if Colonel Kekewich had not had the strength to put them immediately on short rations. Sick people would have pined away. Hundreds were saved from the clutches of enteric fever through Mr. Rhodes's garden, which procured for them fruit and vegetables. It seemed such a pity that these two great men could not work together; but it was not to be.

There was one man I noticed especially in Kimberley —Major O'Meara. He was chief intelligence officer, post-master, press censor—in fact, everything. As intelligence officer, he had a difficult task in Kimberley with the authorities, and, as censor, with the correspondents; but with all these difficulties he did his work

splendidly and was of enormous value. Kimberley to me was practically Mr. Rhodes. I spent a part of almost every day with him in his garden at Kenilworth, at the Sanatorium, or at a De Beers meeting; and most of my time was spent in either studying or painting Mr. Rhodes, who did everything in his power to make me comfortable in Kimberley, and proved himself a real friend. There never was a man like him! He is a giant before whom all other men seem pigmies. Everything he does is a success. He once started a cemetery at Kimberley, and took a great deal of pains to make it perfect—had it elaborately planted with trees, and did everything possible to make it a brilliant success (if the phrase may pass in this connection). After it was completed he went away from Kimberley for some time, and when he returned, after the declaration of war, he went with his manager to look at the cemetery and found it—empty! "This won't do!" exclaimed Mr. Rhodes. "What's the meaning of it? Why is it empty?" His manager said he fancied it was because the women had an idea that, being a new place, it would be a little solitary. "O, but I can't have that! I'll offer them a premium for the first man buried here," said Mr. Rhodes, a little piqued at the bare idea of a scheme of his verging on failure, and determined to bring about a success at any cost. He began by offering a bonus to widows who would bring their husbands to be buried in his cemetery—quite a large sum of money, but of no avail. Eventually one poor woman allowed her husband to be buried there. He was interred with

KAFFIRS LEAVING KIMBERLEY



great pomp, and a handsome marble stone erected over his grave. But even then the scheme hung fire. The inhabitants passing the gates of the beautiful cemetery would look through the railings and see that one gentleman lay there in solitary state, and go away shaking their heads and thinking how lonely it must be. Mr. Rhodes was so exasperated that he increased the bonus until it was a very large sum. The inhabitants gradually began to weaken, one after another bringing dead to the lonely cemetery. The thing developed into a great success. The cemetery is filling up in quite a healthy way. This is one of the schemes which in any other hands than those of Mr. Rhodes would have been a failure.

I came in touch with Colonel Kekewich also. He is a thick-set burly man who struck me as being capable of holding his own against any one. I had heard that he could be just a little irritable at times; and this was proved to me, though most excusably, on one occasion. The veteran war artist, whom I had lost sight of for the time in Kimberley, called on me one morning, at about four o'clock, to say good-bye. He woke me up, and began to discuss a matter of business connected with his share in the Cape cart. I hated being disturbed, and the conversation presently became so heated and so loud that it penetrated the wall to Colonel Kekewich's room and woke him up. I shall never forget his roar of "Silence!" It was so violent and so vigorous that it petrified us both. Not another word was uttered. I went to sleep, and the Veteran quietly wrapped towels

round his boots, gently crept down the passage, and melted away. This was the last that I saw of the Veteran.

Kimberley was a dull place at this time. There was nothing of interest going on. Everything was "siege": all the babies were called "siege"; nothing was talked of but shells and their effects; nothing was to be seen but mines and forts. Our one excitement was the buying of our outfit, which we were able to get through the help of Mr. Rhodes. Rapidly we settled up all our affairs, gave up our room at the Club, and were prepared to start for Klip Drift by night; but Colonel Kekewich would not hear of it—it would not be safe, he said. The De Beers were sending out a company whose escort had to be strengthened because of the Boers. He insisted on our staying the night in Kimberley; and, as they had confiscated our beds, we slept under the billiard table.

Next morning we started off early in the company of a famous looting doctor who was nicknamed "Cronje." Wherever that man passed, the country might have been reckoned swept. No one ever attempted to follow "Cronje" with the idea of finding anything, for he took everything from a postage stamp to a cooking pot.

Our new horses were very fresh, although they had been half-starved during the siege, and, in comparison with our other poor dears, they covered the ground fairly well. There was very little incident on the way —except the lootings of the doctor. We saw no Boers, but only traces of their flight, such as strings of waggons

LIEUT.-GENERAL POLE-CAREW



and debris generally. When we arrived at Klip Drift, finding the Modder too much swollen to take our outfit across, we left it in charge of Roberts, a servant of Mr. Rhodes, and crossed by pontoon to the opposite side, where the Guards' tent was pitched. There I met General Pole-Carew, who immediately insisted that we should stay to dine with him. It was a charming though eccentric meal. Two waggons knocked into one formed an excellent dining-room; while empty meat tins, ammunition cases, all sorts of odds and ends, served as chairs. I shall never forget the picture it made—that brilliant kerosene-lighted Boer waggon with the handsome General and his staff seated at the simple board. It was a scene that only Rembrandt could have depicted. Only he could have suggested faithfully the purple night, the waggon flooded with golden light, a few touches of colour appearing here and there on the label of a meat tin, and in the midst of the blaze of gold the handsome bronzed faces of the men clearly silhouetted. The General was in splendid form that night, as were his staff; it was only at a moment like this that one had the opportunity of meeting such a simple, natural group of men. Every man was at his best; the conversation sparkled with humour; in fact, it was one of the most brilliant and entertaining parties I have ever attended. The General told some excellent stories. The one that appealed to me most was about a dear old friend of his, Colonel of a militia regiment, who had a great many thieves among his men, and could never keep them in

order. He was always complaining to General Pole-Carew about this, and not without reason, for there was one period when the poor old gentleman couldn't keep his silk bandannas. "How can I help it," he would say ruefully, "when a man draws your attention to the state of his boots, and you stoop down into exactly the right angle to have your handkerchief whipped out?" The Colonel came one morning to see the General in great distress, and said, "What am I to do? Last night there was a row in the canteen; but no sooner had I put my head in the door to quell the disturbance than I was half-blinded by some ruffian knocking my hat over my eyes, and before I could get it right, my watch, chain, and everything were stolen." At last the Colonel had to fall back on strategy in order to save his bandannas and other small personal valuables, and he devised rather a pretty little scheme. It was this: while inspecting the rear of the front rank he would order the rear rank to right-about-turn. Thus he won the day! A Von Moltke was lost in that Colonel.

Not only did the General entertain us with his stories: he drew us all out until we ourselves sparkled, and until even I found myself chatty. After dinner it was so dark, so clearly impossible to find one's way without tumbling into the river, that the General begged we would stay the night with him, offering us a cart to sleep under and all sorts of luxuries; but we, being amateur campaigners, were naturally feeling some pangs of anxiety concerning our new outfit over the water, and determined to get back to it that night

PONTOON-BUILDING AT KLIP DRIFT



whatever happened. The General gave us the password; and, as I knew exactly how to reach the pontoon by day, I fondly imagined that it would be the same thing at night. I was mistaken. The journey back to my outfit was one of the most dangerous, aimless, and athletic performances I have ever executed. For two hours I groped about in the black night, feeling absolutely hopeless. I fell over sleeping Tommies; ran into gate-posts; tumbled into unsuspected holes; and was challenged half-a-dozen times by suspicious sentries. On one occasion I had a very nasty fall into a deep and muddy hole, while at the same moment a voice rang out, sharply, "Halt! Who goes there?" In my confusion I answered, "Mortimer Menpes." Luckily, the sentry possessed a sense of humour. Bursting into a loud guffaw, he marched on his way; otherwise I might have stood a very good chance of being shot. At last, by some miracle of chance which I never quite understood, I reached the pontoon. The trip across the river was (to say the least of it) not pretty. All sorts of queer black objects bobbed up and down on the water. Impelled by a horrible fascination, I could not help watching them as they passed, and soon discovered that they were Boers in black frock-coats, dead as door-nails, of course. After that I did not feel at all chatty. But the Tommy who was rowing me across felt no qualms whatever in that direction, and shouted jocosely, "Hullo! there comes a Boer," as something came with a thud against the pontoon. In a matter-of-fact way he pushed it clear, and

watched it bobbing, bobbing, bobbing, down the stream, and then being swept away with the current out of our sight. This was my first ugly experience in South Africa. Like a flash, War burst in upon me with all its terrible reality; and I began to wonder whether this was the place for an artist—whether it would not have been better to take a trip to Japan, there to paint cherry blossoms and purple iris gardens. "But here I am, and here I must remain and make the best of it," thought I, as I crept into my little tent, and endeavoured to keep out the fearful stench from dead cattle etc. that the Boers had left behind as a parting gift.

CHAPTER V

STORY OF A CAPE CART

THE first and most important thing to be done next morning was to get our Cape cart and horses across pontoon. That was a tremendous business. We had twenty or thirty Tommies to help us; but the operation was dangerous and extremely wearing to our nerves, especially when the cart and the horse were nearly lost. However, we arrived in safety, joined the Guards Brigade, and immediately began to draw rations for ourselves and fodder for the horses. And really, when I come to look back upon the camp life at Klip Drift, that was about all we did. The days were monotonous: in fact, the only excitement seems to me to have been when General Cronje and the 4000 prisoners were brought in to camp, or when the C.I.V. drifted in to pay us a visit, having lost their way. The days were much alike, but never actually dull. We were always kept occupied by the need of finding and preparing our food. Food was an important question with us correspondents, and occupied half our time. For example, early

in the morning the Kaffir boy would give us a cup of coffee and a biscuit; after which we would pack him off to the Quartermaster-Sergeant to draw our rations for luncheon. Then, if there happened to be an especially glorious sunrise, or if the scenery lent itself to painting, I would work; if not, I would search for food. And this grew to be quite a fad of mine: it was my unceasing pride to try and vary our menu as much as possible, and I managed to secure all sorts of unheard-of luxuries, for there is no occasion to starve anywhere if you have only the wit to look about you. I used to bake bread in the lid of a biscuit tin, and all kinds of queer concoctions in the way of cakes fried with mutton fat; but my greatest triumph was the kidneys. The whole camp marvelled at my craft with kidneys. Although none of the officers, not even the General himself, ever had kidneys for breakfast, or ever saw a kidney, we two correspondents indulged in one every morning. How I got them they never knew, nor ever will know; but they were all uncommonly fond of my society at that period, I remember, and no fire was considered half so convenient as mine for lighting one's pipe over. A kidney or two! That sounds nothing to me now; but what it was to all of us then, and how pathetically important and serious to a lot of hungry Tommies was the cooking of a kidney and the vague chance of securing a bit of one! I remember how they flocked round me, lighting their pipes right over the top of the coveted dainty, and glaring at it while

TOMMY COOKING—KLIP DRIFT



talking in an absent-minded way of other things. There was one man especially who was always there. After a while his presence quite got on my nerves: when I was serving out coffee he would come and lean his old tin pannikin against the fire without a word, and then look away while of course it had to be filled. Then, there were the potatoes. I was really proud of these: there was not another man in camp who could get them, and I was made a hero of accordingly. On my coming back with my pockets bulged with the rare vegetable, men were anxious to walk by my side, almost stamping on me in their eagerness to be near enough, treading in my footprints—and all for a potato!

After a time even the hunts for kidneys and potatoes became monotonous, and our interest in food began to pall. I spent much time in studying the men in camp. They interested me, and I found them to be a splendid set of fellows, generous and kind-hearted. Nothing pleased Tommy more than for you to show him your sketches, sit down and talk with him, or share a meal with him, however stinted the rations. One day a diversion occurred in camp in the shape of a correspondent, *en route* for Modder River, whose horse had broken down, while he himself was starving. I was able to help him with his provisions in the way of procuring coffee and biscuits from the Quartermaster-Sergeant; and I took the opportunity of driving him in to Jacobsdal, where General Wavell fitted him up with a horse from the Grahamstown Mounted Infantry, and

started him on his way towards Modder. When I first arrived I found the General talking to another General, a very well-known man with a reputation for using rather quaint and forcible language; and he certainly did strike me as having rather a picturesque way of talking. When we were first introduced he glared at me for a moment in silence, and then burst out, saying, "O! you're a —— artist—are you? Well, have you ever been to Natal?" I said that I had not had that pleasure. "By George!" he said, "that's the —— country for scenery!" Then he began to describe the scenery of Natal, but in such quaint language that it nearly picked me off my seat. He said: "Once I stood before the —— mountains of Natal. These —— mountains were worn away at their base with the friction of thousands of feet of water; but then it was all dry, —— —— —— dry. Yes, sir; and I said to myself, I'm a —— romantic person, for I thought of the enormous amount of water that must have passed by there, and I tell you the —— water must have rushed through there, tearing away at the base of these mountains, and I —— well won't stand it any longer! Now, can you paint it?" I told him that I feared that my poor colours were not sufficient to paint such a scene. "Well, I've described it to you, and pretty good too—isn't it?" he asked, with a beam. And that is the literal description of a scene in Natal as told me by the General—and a thoroughly good fellow he was. During my visit, General Wavell showed me over the hospital at Jacobsdal, and as I watched him

MAJOR-GENERAL WAVELL



going the rounds with a charming word and smile for every patient he struck me as being a delightful sympathetic fellow. When we came back we found the emphatic General waiting for us rather impatiently. "Well," he said, "where have you been?" We told him. "O! you're so —— sympathetic; but I can go over hospitals too, and you'll soon see that I can be sympathetic when I like." So back we went again, when the General, anxious to show how sympathetic and tender he could be, went up to the first patient he saw, who happened to be a C.I.V., and a man who had travelled with me on the s.s. *Briton*. "Well, well," said the General in a tone that made every invalid start out of his bed, "what are you doing here, I should like to know? What is the matter with you?" The man murmured that his leg was shattered. "And a —— good job too!" he exclaimed. "Aren't you proud of it? You ought to be —— well pleased." This was by way of being especially tender; but the man evidently relished this kind of talk, for he grinned with pride all over his jolly face, as the General with his purple but cheering adjectives passed on to the next bed.

That night General Wavell lent me his bed, and, although it was the most comfortable I had slept in for weeks, it was not much of a boon to me, coupled with the fearful disturbances that went on all night—bangings at the door, despatches coming in, grunts from the A.D.C., who slept on a couch, as time after time he was forced to spring up and light the gas, on

one occasion setting fire to the sleeve of his pyjamas in doing so. All these little incidents of the night combined to make me doubt the luxury of having a real bed to sleep in, and caused me to wonder whether my own little tent on the veldt would not have been more desirable.

Next morning I learnt with a shock that the Guards Brigade were anticipating a move forward. This news sent me tearing back to Klip Drift, where I heard that we were not to start until 5 A.M. the following morning. That night I dined with General Pole Carew in the captured Boer waggon. While we were dining a most terrible storm came on, quite the most violent I had witnessed in South Africa, with hailstones as large as eggs, and rain that left the veldt one glistening sheet of water. I shall never forget that night. It showed me what splendid stuff our men were made of. I felt proud to be a Britisher. We all did. Whenever I hear men bitten with Anglophobia speak confidently of the decline of the British Empire, I think of "Tommy" as I saw him that night at Klip Drift; and the day of our decline seems very far distant. Our army is made up of the finest and the pluckiest men in the world—never discouraged—happiest when things are most hopeless —always energetic and good-natured amid the most trying of circumstances.

It was past midnight, and we were all hanging about the waggon reluctant to rush out into the fearful night, when suddenly, during a lull in the storm, we heard the loud singing and cheering of boisterously happy men.



LIEUT.-COLONEL MAXSE



We all listened as a rollicking chorus went up, and even these officers almost felt like weeping out of sheer pride for the splendid fellows. "That's just like Tommy," exclaimed the General, struggling not to sound too proud. "The veldt is at the present moment one sheet of water; when the men lie down they lie in water; when they stand up they stand in water; they're soaked through and through: yet listen to them now." As he spoke a ringing cheer went up, with shouts of "What ho! she bumps!" as they performed a frantic war-dance round a man who had just managed to light a bit of wood under his tunic, causing quite a festive little flare-up. That was a terrible night! The lightning was vivid and continuous, lasting far into the night, and the storm seemed to grow in violence as the hours wore on. Luckily, we were comparatively dry; but during the night, to add to the general excitement, it was reported that the majority of our Kaffir drivers had got hold of a keg of rum, and had emptied it; consequently, they were all drunk. Curious to see the effect of this disaster, I followed the Sergeant out of the tent, and made my way to the camp fires. Here disorder reigned, and it was a wild scene. The camp was flooded with water, and the vivid lightning caused the veldt to look like one great sheet of burnished steel; scores of Kaffirs lay before the fires like sodden logs; the men, thinking of the march forward in two or three hours, gazed down at them in blank dismay. Not for long, however. Tommy can always master a situation, however

desperate. In a very short time, by sheer force of will, they had stuck the niggers up on their high waggon seats, whip in one hand, reins in the other, looking as grave and dignified as judges.

At 5 o'clock precisely we started on our march towards Bloemfontein: that most famous march of modern times; a march that was next to impossible; a march that, I believe, no soldiers other than our own, with their magnificent pluck and endurance, could have possibly carried out. To explain the myriads of difficulties that had to be overcome—the difficulties of transport, of space, time, country, and convenience—would be impossible. They were tremendous. If I could only have framed within my hands a picture of any part or time of that march, and have conveyed it to England,—a picture that would have shown the lumbering British waggons jolting across country, occasionally smashing up through sheer heaviness, the cannons sinking axle-deep in the spongy ground, the struggles of the ambulance corps to attend to fainting men, the screaming of the Kaffir drivers, the pain, the deaths, the bustle of that ever-passing khaki procession, —you would have put your hands to your eyes and cried, "Heavens! it must stop—they cannot do it." But they did it, nobly and bravely; and at what a cost! We were forced to leave behind us upon the veldt strings upon strings of dying horses, mules, oxen, etc. When a horse dropped down with fatigue and hunger, there was no time to shoot it; it could only be cut from the traces, and left to die where it fell,



TRANSPORT IN DIFFICULTIES



while the procession passed on again. And it was the rush and tear of it all that wore out men and beasts. You cannot outspan oxen at the same time that you outspan mules; but on that march to Bloemfontein everything swept on together. There was no time for such trifles to be taken into consideration, and the one prevailing idea was to push onwards, always onwards, however dearly it cost us.

All this, of course, was very necessary and inevitable; but to see the poor creatures suffering, to watch them (game to the end) reaching up their necks for a last nibble at a tuft of grass, to meet the despairing, almost human, look in their beautiful eyes—a look that seemed to say, "For Heaven's sake, shoot me!"—and then pass on one's way unmoved,—that was impossible. One agony, however, we were saved from; and that was the presence of vultures and birds of prey. I have heard men in talking of this march describe the graceful circling and sweeping of these animals; but it may be taken for a fact that they were not there.

At this time I was more or less attached to the Guards Brigade, and I was often surprised to hear them talked of as poor dears who, of course, would never be put on half rations,—the Guards must dine on luxuries and sleep in tents. This amused me; for if ever a body of men roughed it, slept tentless on the veldt, lived on half rations, and even quarter rations, those men are the Guards. A splendid set of men they are, too—unequalled in South Africa for physique and fitness, with a finer ring about them, it seems to me, than any others.

I should not like to state how many miles this Brigade accomplished within the twenty-four hours. It would scarcely be credited. I marched with them, for my horses gave out almost immediately after we started. I have never had to contend with such difficulties, or experienced such utter hopelessness, as I did on that march. Life at times seemed hardly worth enduring. To begin with, one of the horses which I had bought from the De Beers people as being five years old turned out to be much more like fifteen ; both horses were starving, knock-kneed, and devoid of grit. Just as things were at their worst, my companion left me, and rode on ahead with his own horse, which happened to be a shade fresher and younger than mine ; he was able to accomplish a little jog now and then, which, however, soon jogged him out of my sight, and left me friendless. There were no roads ; the ground was soft with the recent rains ; we were cutting right across the very roughest of country, often crossing over huge boulders ; and my sorry steeds soon gave up even the very mild idea of speed that they had entertained, and could be persuaded to do nothing but walk, leaning on each other the while. Then I began to be anxious, and my one idea was to lighten their load as much as possible. This I did by smuggling a package or so on to every other waggon that passed—clothing, lime juice, tinned meats—everything went, excepting just my painting materials. This light weight made a slight improvement for a time ; but, although they pulled their hardest, the poor beasts could manage no more than a feeble

crawl, until suddenly, with a great creaking and groaning, the Cape cart tilted over on one side, with its wheels sunk deep in the mud, while the horses calmly lay down on the ground, one resting on the other, and gave up the struggle.

Things were desperate! I knew it was hopeless to ask help from any of the men marching past us. It was every man for himself at that period, and there were but two things to be done—either to ride my youngest horse, or to walk and leave everything, both of which were quite impossible, as they would necessitate losing my chance of work. Of one thing I was determined. Somehow or other I would get my outfit to Bloemfontein. That seemed the only tangible idea. First of all, I tried by sheer force to get some sort of a move-on. I dug the earth from the wheels with my hands, and tried to lift the cart bodily. All my efforts were in vain, and resulted only in sinking our cart still deeper in the mud; while the fifteen-year-old horse looked sheepishly on at me out of one filmy eye, as if to say, "How futile!" Then I allowed the Kaffir boy to use his powers of persuasion; and I never saw man work so hard, or try so many schemes as he did! He screamed, he tickled, he pushed, he pulled, he sang quaint ditties; but all to no purpose, until finally he used his trump card—scientific whipping. This (to put things more clearly) meant flicking crisply and cleverly with the whip in one spot, just under the horse's knee. If circumstances had not been so tragic, I could have screamed myself ill to see the way in

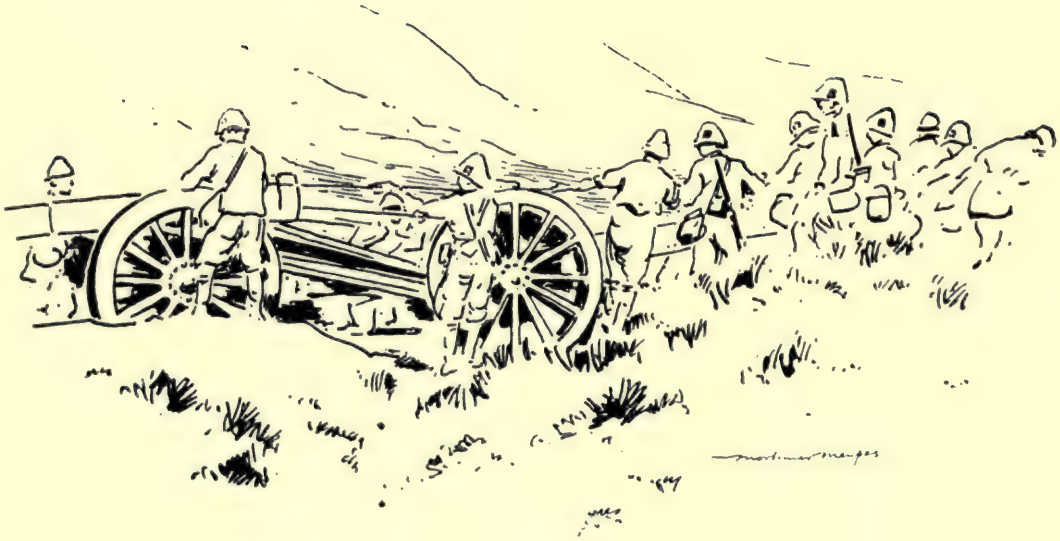
which the animal dodged the lash : too tired to move, it had only sufficient energy to lift up one leg at every other flick. This rather upset poor Robert's ideas ; but, firmly convinced that an hour's scientific whipping would rouse the horses up, he was anxious to continue the process. However, by this time the animals were becoming so human in their suffering, and were looking up at me so imploringly, that I bade him put down his whip and leave them alone.

Now I felt callous, and for the first time during my career as a correspondent I actually gave up hope. Sitting on a stone by the side of the way, I began to wonder if it was not true, after all, what people said, that in life nothing matters. After all, what did matter? The Cape cart, the horses, the fact that the troops were passing and that night was coming on and that we should probably be captured or starved—of what consequence was it all? Dulled and indifferent to these dangers, I sat stolidly on, watching the stream of dun-coloured men for ever passing, passing, before my eyes, and listened to the songs of the soldiers, the cheers and the sobs, the murmurs of men in despair.

If it had only been possible for the world to have peeped through my framed hands as I sat by the roadside, they would have seen a series of pictures ever changing yet a deadly monotony—pictures more terrible and more strange than any they had dreamt of in their wildest dreams. An ammunition waggon would come swinging along the road with its jaded beasts and swearing Kaffir driver. Suddenly a mule falls;



A 6-INCH GUN IN DIFFICULTIES



they cut it adrift as rapidly as possible, and start on again ; but even this small stoppage causes block and confusion all along the line. Still the khaki procession streams by—khaki coats, khaki men, khaki faces, khaki carts ; everything is khaki, save for a touch or two of colour, brought in by, perhaps, a Kaffir driver. There is a terrific roar of hoarse voices swearing and singing : it is the 4.7, and Tommy turns round amazed at the string of new words that greet his ears as the sailors dash up. There is a smash just in front of me : one of the wheels has given way. "It is finished," I think. "They have no chance of mechanical help, and it is impossible to save the gun." Hastening to take advantage of this splendid subject for a picture, I whipped out my sketch book, all difficulties forgotten. "Hullo!" exclaimed one of the young officers in a gentle, charming tone. "O, you're going to make a sketch of the 4.7 in difficulties,—are you?" Two seconds after, he had raised himself in his stirrups and begun swearing at his men in such violent and forcible language that I was amazed. But the reason for this outburst was soon made clear. The men had not brought the gun round to the right position before starting to move it. Consequently, he screamed, and another officer screamed, until between the two the air rang with vigorous and varied oaths. It was all new to me. Not only were there totally new words : there were whole sentences composed of them. But what magnificently capable men they were—these sailors! Here was an apparently hopeless task ; yet

they never lost heart, but set to work with tremendous vigour. They were not going to be left—not they! If the cannon had broken in two they would have put it together again through the sheer force of their almost inhuman courage Nothing seemed to hinder them. Once, while they were repairing this break, there was a slight move in the cannon, and, like some great monster, it swung round, caught up a man just as easily as I would flick at a match, and tossed him high into the air. He came down, thud! the ambulance carried him off, and I saw him no more. But an incident of this kind was not allowed to interfere with the work for one moment. The men went on singing, and the officers swearing, until the wheel was repaired; and the 4.7 rolled on.

People would have marvelled had they seen the work done by the Army Service Corps that day—the men who have done the finest work in South Africa, upon whom all the responsibility and all the strain of that terrible march fell. Every one, however remotely connected with the duties of the transport, felt the fearful pressure of those few days, days which added many years to the lives of more than one of its members. They are the people to whom all the honour and glory is rightly due—who should be lionised, praised, and made much of above all others. The work done by the ambulance corps during this march must also come in for its share of praise. The waggons were filled to overflowing; many men died from hunger and fatigue, while some had to be dragged to Bloem-

fontein by two men. I saw a Highlander, a big burly fellow, dragging himself painfully along with his head sunk on his chest, groaning at every step; he reeled over and fell; the ambulance came and carried him off.

The sight of all this splendid courage and endurance brought my mind back with a start to the reality of my own difficulties. The afternoon was wearing on; nearing us rapidly was the tail end of the column—how rapidly it came!—and I knew that, once let it pass us, and night come on, the Boers could close in upon us and whisk us off to Pretoria before we knew where we were. My only hope of salvation, I felt, was to commandeer an animal of sorts, no matter what it was so long as it sufficed to eke our horses on to the next stopping-place. I did not mind if it was a camel. In fact, I rather wished I could find a camel. Camels are such splendidly plucky beasts. I informed Robert of my latest inspiration, and took my old horse, the very old one, and began to prowl around in search of some stray animal. Suddenly I saw a mule grazing in the distance. How I longed for my looting doctor! I felt sure that I alone should never be able to capture it. Determined to have a good try, I crept closer and closer; but still the animal went on eating and never budged. I advanced to within a few yards; but it did not take the slightest notice of me. Praising myself for a second Orpheus, I marched boldly up to it, and gently patted its back. Still it did not move, and I concluded that it must have been one of the poor unfortunates (slightly gamer than the rest) that had been

cut adrift and left to die. I cannot tell what it found to eat—the ground was as bare as the palm of your hand —but still it went on eating. It was a most unsightly animal with a wall eye and long hair, branded on the hoof by the Government. But, indifferent to appearances, I hitched this latest acquisition on to the Cape cart, along with the other horses; and my outfit presented quite a novel and fantastic appearance, from the decorative standpoint, with its one unsightly mule—to say nothing of the two ancient De Beers horses. But eventually we started, and the wall-eyed mule proved to be my salvation. The poor patient little creature pulled and tugged for all he was worth, and soon put on quite a sprint—so much so that we began to gain on the column. We crept up closer and closer, passed regiment after regiment, got ahead of the Guards Brigade, and sailed in at the next stopping-place at the head of the column. Here I found my companion, who had so unkindly left me in the lurch, calmly eating sardines, quite unaware that he had done wrong in deserting me at the critical moment.

Many interesting, exciting, and amusing coincidences occurred during this march on Bloemfontein. Indeed, they were too many to relate; but there was one curious little incident that I shall never forget. It was at the end of a long day's march, just outside Aasvogel Kop. The sun was setting; there was a red-brick farmhouse, a typical Boer house, stuck down in the middle of the veldt; the rays of the sun—long and low—cast the shadows of trees in long purple blotches on the red

ORANGE FREE STATE FARMHOUSE



brick. Round the house was a deserted garden, a wilderness bereft of every single flower, every fruit, every vegetable, with the exception of a few prickly pears. At the window of the house, his sad careworn face illumined by the splendour of the setting sun, sat the Commander-in-Chief, gazing out and far beyond the little lonely garden. I wondered what were the thoughts passing through that anxious busy brain, upon which rested so vast a responsibility. Needless to add, there was a humorous side to this pathetic picture. Glancing a little to the left, I caught a glimpse of a khaki-clad Tommy who, fearfully and furtively, keeping watch on the unconscious figure of the Commander-in-Chief, was snatching at all the prickly pears he could get hold of, and stuffing them into his pocket, prickles and all, as fast as he could—looting before his Commander's very eyes.

We arrived in Bloemfontein at last, and in gorgeous style, being drawn by the wall-eyed mule. The moment we arrived Kaffir women showered down on us a rain of golden quinces and cigarettes ; the people screamed and wept, and almost went mad in their joy. We first of all drew up at a little stable, where a man took hold of our horses and the mule, and said, proudly, " I am going to do this : no one else shall," as if he were craving a great privilege from me. " Very well," I answered : " you may." We were all made a fuss of that day. Tommies were walking arm in arm with gentlemen, beaming all over their faces with joy ; local drapers and grocers clamoured for the privilege of

holding our horses. One man, a tradesman dressed in a kilt, came up to us and shouted, "Come and eat with me—come and eat with me!" "Right you are," I shouted. "We will." We went, and it was a most extraordinary business. We had supper in the kitchen of his simple, primitive little Scotch home, charmingly entertained by his neat little Scots wife. I never knew such people. They were hospitality personified. They insisted upon my staying the night, and next morning I woke up at the shock of a stamp album being flopped down upon my chest. It was the child of the house, who had come to entertain me at this early hour, and piped, "Please, have you got any Commando stamps?" Then the father came in to shave, talking amicably to me the while. Afraid that I should feel lonely, these dear good people took me straight into their home and treated me as one of themselves.

How those brilliant opening days in Bloemfontein come back to me, with their blaze of sun and blare of trumpets, as I turn over my sketches in the gloom of a November afternoon! The pictures I conjure up: the sweet-faced nuns dispensing tea to toil-worn soldiers as they tramped through the pretty gardens; the Scots Guards cleaning up their long-disused instruments, and unpacking their war-worn drums; the delightful hospitality of the Bloemfontein citizens; the joyful screams of the grateful Kaffirs—for the Kaffirs hate the Boers and love the English! Then, there was the all-pervading majestic individuality of the little Commander-in-Chief passing to and fro through the ever-

IN THE GARDEN OF THE CONVENT, BLOEMFONTEIN



changing crowds—an individuality that in its fascination for his devoted soldiers recalled the wonderful influence that the great Napoleon exercised over the troops that followed him to every battlefield in Europe. Bloemfontein itself is a pretty little town with no attempt at architecture, but set round with lovely gardens, which soon gave me plenty of work to do.

We had scarcely settled down in our rooms when I heard that Lord Roberts had issued a proclamation stating that any one found stealing horses or possessing stolen horses, mules, or oxen, would be shot. As I heard it a horrible feeling crept over me, and a tiny stream of cold perspiration trickled down my back. Without a word, I stole away, under cover of the night, and quickly let my wall-eyed mule loose, to wander just wherever he thought fit—my dear plucky little mule! I was sorry to do it, it looked so pathetically up at me the while; but it had to be done, although my friends said to me, "Fill up the brand with mud—they'll never know." I preferred to be on the safe side. I had no use for an early firing-party before breakfast.

After staying for a time in Bloemfontein, and when the first burst of enthusiasm had subsided, I found that the inhabitants to a man were against us. They all seemed to resent Englishmen fresh from the country, and no one seemed to want a change of government. The residents, English and Scots, were principally clerks, and all seemed to have developed something in common. The tones of voice were alike, and the

struggle to impress one with their independence was almost common to all.

When I first saw Bloemfontein, the day Lord Roberts entered, I thought there was more loyalty. A month in the town completely changed my views. The Kaffirs alone were pleased to see us. I used to go to the market early every morning, endeavouring to buy fruit; and it was there that I had the opportunity of studying and talking to Free State farmers. One morning a farmer came up to me. I was dressed in khaki with a helmet. He evidently took me for a soldier. "Please," said he, "where can I find Lord Roberts?" Now, this was at five o'clock in the morning, and I hinted to this pastoral gentleman that it was perhaps a little early for his visit. "Well, never mind," he said. "I will go later; but I thought he would like to know as soon as possible that the bridge at Modder River is going to be blown up. I have accurate information that it is undermined already." I told him to go by all means to Lord Roberts, and as quickly as he could. Next morning I met this same little man again. "I have just heard two reports," he said, "and I shouldn't be surprised if that is the bridge being blown up." "Really?" I exclaimed in astonishment; and a little later in the day I was told that his prediction had come true.

At a saddler's at Bloemfontein, whither I had gone to get a hole bored in a strap, I saw the Kaffir driver who had driven Mr. Kruger out of the Boer lines. I had a long talk with this man, and he described the



LORD ROBERTS'S HEADQUARTERS, AASVOGEL KOP



undertaking to me exactly as it occurred. He told me that all Mr. Kruger said to him during the voyage was, "Go on, go on; quicker, quicker"; and on they went full tilt. Once a shell burst very near them, and the redoubtable warrior showed fright—so much so that when they came to the place where they were to have stayed the night he was too much frightened to halt, and, although they were in comparative safety, he begged the Kaffir to put in fresh horses and "go on, go on."

Everything in Bloemfontein, at the time I was there, was at famine price, and at last the tradesmen got to the length of sticking large lists of things they did not sell in the shop windows—such as "No bacon," "No oatmeal for porridge." After I had stayed in Bloemfontein for over a month, everything and everybody had become so demoralised that it seemed as though we were going to stay there for ever. When the craze for postage stamps came on, I thought it was quite time to go home. But before I left South Africa altogether, I took a trip to Natal, and got as far as Ladysmith. I was greatly disappointed, however, in the scenery. It did not, in any sense of the word, do credit to the emphatic General's description of its beauties. It was mere tropical scenery, and did not appeal to me nearly so much as that of the Cape; and I speedily left it to return home. On my return to England I went back with a boatload of men who were all multi-millionaires, so much used to counting their money by thousands that they could not bring themselves to pronounce the word in full, and could not manage anything more than "thou'."

CHAPTER VI

LORD ROBERTS

I WAS first introduced to Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein, where I sketched him in his own study. But it was by no means the first sketch I had made of the Commander-in-Chief. I had sketched him many times—on the march from Klip Drift to Bloemfontein, on the top of a kopje watching the preparations for a battle, lunching by the side of his Cape cart, having tea in a Free-Stater's garden ; in fact, I had opportunities of making sketches of him in every conceivable position. But it was at Bloemfontein that I had my real chance. There I had the privilege of being introduced to him by Admiral Maxse, who arranged a series of sittings at which I had the opportunity of coming in touch with him and of studying his delightful individuality. I was greatly helped also by Colonel Chamberlain, Lord Roberts's military secretary, who is an artist himself and took a great interest in my work. It was he who received me on my first visit to the Presidency, at nine o'clock one lovely morning, and escorted me into the presence of the Commander-in-Chief. This house had been the

LORD ROBERTS



residence of President Steyn ; now it was Lord Roberts's headquarters in Bloemfontein—a building hopelessly vulgar both inside and out, filled with intolerable French statuary and rosebud-bedecked walls—everything of the Early Victorian, antimacassar period. Lord Roberts's own sanctum was just saved by its sombreness. It had evidently been used by President Steyn as a library. At any rate, it was stacked with books—large dusty volumes lay everywhere. It was a great bare room with a good-sized desk and tall windows looking out on rather a dreary garden. In short, the whole place was remarkable for its irredeemable ugliness.

This is where I found myself on the morning of Lord Roberts's first sitting, very shy and much amazed at my own boldness in taking Lord Roberts at his word and daring to appear paint-box in hand. He was so busy that I felt I should not have been there. It seemed scarcely the moment to trouble him with so trivial a thing as this sitting when the attention of the world was concentrated on his action. "It seems a presumption in me to ask you to sit, sir," I said. "Ah, Mr. Menpes, don't talk of presumption," he answered with wonderful sweetness and charm: "it is a great privilege to sit to you, and I am delighted that we have you with us to secure a colour record of what will be a historic war." So all my tremors went for nothing! These few courteous words, this simple, friendly greeting from the great Commander-in-Chief, put me at my ease at once, and gave me just the

courage that I needed to start my portrait. In this room everything and everybody was in a whirl of business; there was no pretence, no outward show, no decoration, no sword. Here was this little man—simple as a child, working for dear life, economising every moment; every one seemed to have caught the fever for work from the chief, the busiest man in South Africa. There he sat, a small man in a very large room—yet filling it with his presence,—very simply dressed in khaki; everything upon him was khaki and brown leather, devoid of decoration of any sort: he had no ribbons, no shoulder straps, nothing to show that he was a Field-Marshal or a General—nothing to show that he was an officer at all; everything was as simple as it could be. His moustache and hair were quite white; his complexion was as clear and fair as a baby's; he had keen bright eyes, eyes that looked at a man steadily while talking, without embarrassing even the shyest person. The figure might belong to a boy, so upright was it and so compact; and the hands, by their strength and power, might belong to a man of great physique.

Lord Roberts, when standing, is always to be seen with one hand linked in his belt—his characteristic attitude. How every one loves him! You can detect devotion in each look and act of the men about him. The secretaries and A.D.C.s that flit about his desk reverence him; the very scouts that come in with despatches are won over by his gentle bearing. Needless to say that before the sitting was over I too had



LORD ROBERTS—HEAD STUDY



entered to swell the ranks of his enthusiastic admirers. He was courteous and considerate — doing everything in his power to make me feel perfectly at home, pretending to have unlimited time at my disposal, so that I should not be hurried, when in reality every moment was of value ; talking in a natural, sympathetic way all through the sitting, touching lightly on various subjects with all the enthusiasm of a boy. And then he was such a splendid sitter ! He took natural, easy poses, and kept them all through, entering thoroughly into the spirit of the thing and taking a keen interest in the work. When called away to interview a scout or to write a despatch, he never, I noticed, allowed the interruption to break the continuity of his conversation. In short, his conduct was marked by a consideration for the artist which went far to ensure the success of the portrait. *O si sic omnes !*

Lord Roberts is a master of detail, although detail never confuses him. I might liken him to the painter who, though his subject be full of detail and complicated, never loses sight of the broad effect of colour. That is the masterly work ; and that is where Lord Roberts is a master. But perhaps Lord Roberts's greatest charm is his voice—musical, sympathetic, yet at times full of authority : I have heard him rap out clear ringing words of command in a tone that implied immediate obedience.

He asked if I had found any good subjects for pictures in South Africa. I said I had many splendid opportunities for painting pictures on the march, and,

as an instance, mentioned waggons in distress. "Yes, I know," said Lord Roberts quickly: "there were many sad disasters on the march, and many great difficulties to overcome: you should have had enough material there in the way of sketches. But how long have we had you with us?" I said that I had marched with the troops from Klip Drift to Bloemfontein. "Ah," exclaimed Lord Roberts with interest, "then you were with us at Osfontein? Wasn't that a magnificent view one got looking down from the top of the kopje there? The battle must have been of great interest to you, and would surely have made a splendid picture!" And it did make a splendid picture, with Lord Roberts as central figure! There was this little man, surrounded by staff officers and foreign attachés—the smallest man on the kopje—ordering thousands of troops in all directions—the centre of a network of wires running in every direction and keeping him in touch with his entire force. It was then that I had the opportunity of listening to his crisp, clean-cut words of command for the first time, and the power of the man was perhaps seen at its best. It was an ideal position to view a battle from, this kopje: you could see in a clear circle for miles round; and it was an ideal day. The top where we were all gathered together—officers, foreign attachés, correspondents (I noticed that on this occasion there were very few correspondents)—was not much larger than a fair-sized room, so that I had an opportunity of studying these men near. The telescopes on the kopje occupied a certain amount of space—there



LORD ROBERTS WATCHING THE BATTLE OF OSFONTEIN



were telescopes on stands everywhere, large ones, small ones, all perched at different angles. There was one particular telescope that was very much in demand; it occupied a very prominent position. That was a telescope presented to Lord Roberts by the Lord Mayor of London. Every one seemed to have a fancy for this telescope. Suddenly you would see Lord Kitchener rush up and look through it. "They're moving now," he would shout. Up comes Lord Roberts to give his orders in a very authoritative way; after him the officers; and then, of course, the correspondents must all flock up for a peep. Every man who looked through that telescope saw that there was a movement, and there was so much frantic talk going on all around of movements and scooting Boers that I felt convinced the enemy must be chasing one another from kopje to kopje. I was under the impression that all sorts of extraordinary things were going on in that telescope—so much so that when the last batch of correspondents had retired to their respective glasses, and I was led shyly up by an officer to look through the famous instrument, I quite expected to see not only a Boer but also the crisp shadows that would surely be cast on his face on such a brilliant day. It was a fine glass—there was no doubt about that. It seemed to bring everything nearer; but what it did bring nearer was all pretty much of a blank to me. I thought I saw a Boer, and sketched the one I thought I saw, and sent him to *Black and White*. I had slung round my waist a powerful lens which I had not had an opportunity

to use. Now was the moment! I should see everything! But I strained myself in vain: the landscape was as blank as ever. The conversation was now becoming too frantic for my peace of mind—I beckoned to my friend. "Now, look here, what *is* happening?" I asked. "I feel so terribly out of it. For Heaven's sake, tell me whether it's French that's pursuing the Boers, or the Guards Brigade that are chasing them from kopje to kopje." My friend said he would see, and strode to the Lord Mayor's glass. "Why, look! there's a movement!" he shouted. I gazed and gazed—blank, absolutely. This clear vision, I concluded, was a matter of habit, nothing less; one could train oneself to see Boers. I was too fresh. "No," I exclaimed, almost petulantly · "it's no good: I can't see anything." "What!" roared my friend, incredulously. "You don't see anything? Why, there's a movement!" Movement? There was a cloud of grey dust; there was a suspicion of fluff, which looked a trifle fluffier through the telescope. On an emergency it might be taken for scooting Boers; but it would not do for a picture. Greatly discouraged, I turned on my heel and gave up painting battle-pieces, to transfer my attention to Lord Roberts and his staff.

One had the chance on that day of comparing him with such men as Lord Kitchener. These two men were an interesting study as they stood side by side viewing the battle of Osfontein—two totally different characters, working on totally different principles. One was human, sensitive, full of imagination; the other



LORD ROBERTS AND STAFF WATCHING THE BATTLE OF OSFONTEIN



was hard, inscrutable. As an artist, naturally, I thought Lord Roberts the greater. Everything about Lord Kitchener somehow suggested to me the man without imagination. You could picture him, as he stood there, viciously chewing the ends of unlighted cigarettes, preferring a frontal attack to the brilliantly-conceived flanking movements practised by Lord Roberts. He did not seem to hold himself so completely under control as Lord Roberts: when excited he showed his every feeling. Now that Great Britain is drawing in line with the other great nations, now that in the race for supremacy the competitors are more or less evenly balanced, imagination and the finer qualities in man must tell. The time will come when all our leading men—our Statesmen and our Generals—will be chosen because they are men of imagination.

I have travelled more or less all over the world; I have closely studied the people of various nations, their manners and customs, their methods of work, and their policy; and I have come to the conclusion that to occupy a supreme position in the world a people must have imagination, and be capable of understanding and loving beautiful things. I have seen much, for example, of Japan and the Japanese; I know them intimately; and I feel quite sure that they will be the supreme power among nations. They are lovers of Art and lovers of Nature; with this gift of art they will rule the world. You cannot go into the home of the lowest Japanese coolie without his showing you his little collection of art—an exquisite china bowl, a piece

of embroidery, what not? There is real power when every man, woman, and child in a nation loves to surround himself with beautiful things.

Thus I mused to myself as I sat sketching on the kopje, oblivious of the battle and the "movements" going on round me, studying these two great men, in a half-dreamy way, and thinking of what tremendous value a man like Kitchener would have been to England fifty years ago. Then I looked at Lord Roberts. He seemed to me to be an ideal leader of men—humane, kind, full of imagination,—and I was quite sure that he was a lover of Art and Nature.

Lord Roberts's self-control during the battle was almost astounding. Not a muscle of his face was seen to relax; it was only by observing him closely that I could detect a slight nervous movement of the hands. I know nothing of soldiering: I cannot attempt to criticise either the work of Lord Roberts or that of Lord Kitchener. They say that Lord Roberts is brilliant at executive work. I know nothing of that, and I do not pretend to: I simply think of them as men, as human beings, and give my vivid impressions of these two, as I saw them that brilliant sunny day on the kopje at Osfontein. When Lord Kitchener enters a room every one pulls himself together and comes to attention. When Lord Roberts enters a room the conversation is arrested in the same way; but every one looks fondly at him, and murmurs, "What a dear!" I maintain that the man whom every one thinks a "dear"—the man who appeals to the tender side of one's nature—is

BATTLE OF OSFONTEIN



of far more value in the world, and has more real influence over his men, than he who makes men shiver and drags them together like a bundle of dried sticks. You hear amazing stories of how Lord Kitchener will suddenly enter a club in Cape Town, or the Mount Nelson Hotel, in mufti, and with a few words of command will sweep the place of young staff officers who are more or less idling away their time, giving them the choice of starting for the front or for England within twenty-four hours. These stories may be true, and they may not; but they might well be, for that procedure would be more or less in sympathy with the bearing of the man. One hears from officers and men alike that every one is afraid of him; but I do not think that fear necessarily means strength in the true sense of the word.

I was interrupted in the middle of my reflections by a loud boom! boom! Almost upsetting my paint-box, "What's that?" I asked of a correspondent near by. "Why, can't you see? Look down at the base of the kopje!" I looked down, and saw some 4.7 naval guns really doing splendid work. This meant more excitement for the enthusiastic telescopists; and for some time after the first firing not a telescope was idle.

All this time I had been working leisurely at Lord Roberts and his staff. My battle-pieces I had planned to paint later in the day, when there would perhaps be something to see. I had made slight sketches of artillery and troops passing and repassing at the foot of the

kopje; also little slight studies of things that were happening at the moment. I saw no fight—that was all miles away—yet I was in the thick of a battle, they said. No matter: later, doubtless, the battle would be nearer; then I should do my big work—then guns—— Like a flash an officer, a friend, came up to me. "Well, painter," he said, "are you going to stay on here?" "Rather! That is, I shall go off and come again to-morrow." "What do you mean, man?" laughed my friend. "To-morrow? Goodness knows where we shall be to-morrow! The battle is over: they are retiring!" I was bitterly disappointed. "I thought I should have got my best subjects here to-morrow," I murmured dolefully. "No," said the officer: "they have flown. Three hours from now we shall be flying after them." "O!" I said, and packed up my box.

And so it has been all through with this modern warfare: you can't honestly paint a battle-piece nowadays. You see very little of the fighting. You see the effects of a battle, men mangled and villages destroyed; but as to seeing the enemy, that is an absolute impossibility, even through a telescope. The saying is quite true that a modern battle reduces itself to one man and a puff of smoke—or rather one man and no smoke, the powder being smokeless.

When I arrived at the Presidency to make my second sketch of Lord Roberts, I was very shy and unnerved. This time I was by myself: I had not my friend Admiral Maxse to help me. Also, during the period

BATTLE OF OSFONTEIN—ADVANCE OF MOUNTED INFANTRY AND ARTILLERY, AS SEEN FROM KOPJE OCCUPIED BY HEADQUARTERS STAFF AND NAVAL GUNS



that had elapsed since my first sitting and this one, I had had time to realise the great privilege it was to have Lord Roberts as a sitter. My friends had impressed this upon me so much that they had produced quite a state of fever.

I was met by one of the A.D.C.s, and shown into a large reception-room—a kind of double drawing-room, with huge-patterned, viciously-coloured wallpaper. Here, in this extremely vulgar room, I waited for half-an-hour until Lord Roberts was ready to receive me. Here I was left by the officer who conducted me in, seated on an uncomfortable curly sofa—an Early Victorian sofa—and told to wait. But this half-hour was not wasted ; nor was it altogether disagreeably spent, for I was occupied in studying a group of idlers, mostly staff officers and men of high social position—dukes, princes, peers, foreign attachés,—all wandering about aimlessly with nothing in the world to do. It was a sorry sight, at a time like this, when men were badly needed ; and I pitied these poor fellows ; to watch them struggling to create work was quite sad. Suddenly you would see a man who had been looking vacantly out of the window, hands in pockets, swerve sharply round on his heel and rush to a desk, secure several sheets of paper and a quill pen, press the nib on his nail to test its quality, dip it vigorously in the ink, give it a little shake, and then nibble the end of it thoughtfully. He would nibble and nibble until all inspiration seemed to die away. He would look scowlingly at his paper, then at his pen ; gaze on the ceiling and all round the room ; and

eventually end by putting down the pen and strolling off with the *Cape Times* under his arm. It was not only one man that I saw going through this queer performance—it was half-a-dozen men—during my half-hour in this "Hall of Idlers," as I dubbed it. There were many desks in the room, and men were continually rushing up, anxious to write down as quickly as possible their fleeting inspirations. Some actually got as far as covering a page or two; but it never went farther than the waste-paper basket.

Before I was aware that my time was up, my officer entered to escort me to Lord Roberts. Here was a contrast—no idlers, no triflers, but real workers following the example set by their chief. Every man worked his hardest. I noticed an anxious, careworn look on Lord Roberts's face as I entered—a look which deepened, as I observed him closely, into severe lines. Yet to a casual observer there might have appeared to be no alteration, for he spoke just as charmingly and was just as much interested.

Being a painter, and accustomed to the study of faces, I quickly noticed his preoccupation, and felt that it would be only kind to cut the sitting short. There was some excuse for Lord Roberts's anxiety. It was just at the time of the trouble with the Bloemfontein waterworks, and the bridge that had been blown up: there was cause for worry. Whenever I came to sketch Lord Roberts I found him working. He rarely seems fatigued. You would see him walking in the evening, perhaps with Colonel Chamberlain, his mili-



LORD ROBERTS AND STAFF



tary secretary, always with a few of his staff, talking enthusiastically all the time. Suddenly, while walking at great pace, he would stop, bend his little dapper figure, one hand on his hip, and trace a map of his plans in the dust of the road, his officers anxiously stooping over the dusty little design while their chief enthusiastically explained every aspect of this new development step by step, prodding vigorous little holes in the ground to explain critical situations. Only once in South Africa did I see Lord Roberts really done up. That was at Driefontein, on the march, when, to the dismay of the whole brigade, Lord Roberts suddenly dismounted and sat down on the stoep of a little farmhouse with his head between his hands, thoroughly tired out. I remember watching him from a distance; the sight of this tired little figure, physically worn out and frail, giving way only for one moment, made me shudder: "O, if your strength were to give way!" I thought. "If you were forced to relax the hold you have on this war, what would happen? Who could take up your work? No one!" The possibility could not bear thinking of, and I shook off this nightmare as Lord Roberts mounted his horse and the brigade moved on.

During the many times that I have had the privilege of sketching Lord Roberts I have naturally had to wait in the halls and drawing-rooms at the Presidency, and have had a splendid opportunity of studying the various members of his large staff and their eccentricities. They *were* eccentric! Hitherto I had always waited in the Hall of Idlers; but now their idleness bored me; it got

on my nerves, this constant atmosphere of idleness; and I determined on my last sitting to spend my time in what was called the inner hall. In passing I glanced in at my idlers. They were just as many as before. Following the A.D.C., I entered a great cold bleak hall with a marble floor—everything was marble, even the seats—everything was cold, chilly. I sat down shivering on one of the icy seats, quite prepared to wait some hours, and my glance fell on an appallingly embarrassing statue of a lady in the middle of the hall—a modern French statue. This statue, I soon learnt, was mistress of this marble hall. She ruled it with a magic sway; every one was more or less demoralised by her. Scouts, soldiers, idlers, generals,—she hypnotised them all. An officer dashing through on important business, as he neared the middle of the hall, would be arrested in his career, look up, blink, shake himself, and pass on his way. Every one was affected by her—some unconsciously, but none the less affected. The worst case I ever saw was that of a scout, a rugged, manly fellow—one of Rimington's Tigers, brought in by an officer, bearing important news. The officer left him to fetch Lord Kitchener. Poor fellow! how I pitied him standing in the middle of that bleak hall, brought sharply up to attention by the side of the slightly draped monarch—so conscious of her presence—every nerve strained to look smart and answer promptly; while his eyes involuntarily strayed round towards her, blinked, and looked straight ahead again—cruel woman! Presently Lord Kitchener was seen striding down the hall on



SHOEING LORD ROBERTS'S HORSES



business bent; round went the scout's head and back again, like that of a nodding mandarin. Even while Lord Roberts was interrogating him, he could not keep his eyes off her; his agony was pitiful—there was no end to the havoc that wicked woman wrought.

This central hall was very different from the Hall of Idlers. It was full of work and intense excitement. Volunteer officers escorted in Rimington scouts bearing important news; tattered and torn people brought in the atmosphere of the veldt with them. Yet even here there were idlers. Groups of officers drifted in from the drawing-room—men with complexions, decorative men, lounging about in groups talking to one another. Scraps of conversation from them floated to where I sat on my icy seat. One dapper officer would say, while stifling a yawn, "Do you think that medicine has arrived yet?" Then there would be a general smile: medicine meant champagne. "No; but we had a case of cod-liver oil sent up yesterday"—more smiles: medicine, champagne—cod-liver oil, champagne. Then—"Very amusing the ladies were, very amusing! Wanted me to take them out to look for Boers. Devilish difficult to make them understand it was impossible." "You know, really it's rather a bore having ladies at the front—rather in the way. It's all very well at Cape Town; but we don't want them here." "Are the fairies going to lunch at your camp to-morrow?" "Hang it all! they are. I expect they'll want the Chief to take them out and show them some Boers. Upon my word, they are treating this war as if it

was a circus!" "By the way, have you got any missing-dot twopennies?" "No; didn't know there was a missing dot in the twopenny." "Well! look here: let's stroll round to the Post Office and see if we can't get some." Such was the sort of conversation in the inner hall. *Apropos* of missing dots: nearly every officer in the army is a stamp collector. I have heard of one officer's wife who is now building a country-house with the proceeds of some of these missing dots.

In the midst of this idle talk, Lord Kitchener would appear on the scenes. In an instant all conversation stopped, and there was only the sound of the click of heels as the officers, like one man, drew themselves up and saluted. Every soul in that hall drew up to attention as Lord Kitchener passed; even civilians seemed to straighten themselves. So it always is: wherever Lord Kitchener goes his presence works like magic on the men about him; whether in Cape Town or on the march, a look from Lord Kitchener was enough to straighten the back of every laggard. No officer in the British army, not even Lord Roberts himself, is held in such mortal fear.

I always remember the last sitting Lord Roberts was kind enough to give me, because of an interesting talk we had about General and Mrs. Cronje. Lord Roberts was anxious to know if I had painted these celebrities when they were at Klip Drift with the 4000 prisoners. I had made one or two slight sketches of the General while he was being escorted into camp by

DEPARTURE OF CRONJE FROM KLIP DRIFT



the C.I.V.; but he was not feeling particularly happy at the time, and there would have seemed a want of fitness in asking him to come out of his tent and pose for me on the veldt. As to Mrs. Cronje, I had heard different descriptions of her. Some said that she was stout; others, that she was dainty and gem-like. My curiosity was aroused: I felt I must paint her. "But," I said, "I couldn't pluck up the courage to do it." "Why?" enquired Lord Roberts. "Well, she was hopeless as a bit of decoration: I couldn't see her as a picture at all." Then Lord Roberts, always kind and courteous, said, with a smile, "Well, you could hardly expect the poor woman to look decorative after living in the trenches at Paardeberg for that length of time. No woman in the world, after that terrible ordeal, could look anything but ragged." It was little touches like this —his championing of poor old Mrs. Cronje—that gave one an insight into the chivalrous nature of Lord Roberts. Once, when he was reviewing the troops just arrived from India, I was greatly struck by his neat young little figure. No man sat his horse so well as Lord Roberts. I talked to the men in camp afterwards; they were all enthusiastic about their Commander-in-Chief, and I should think that there was not one but would remember every detail of Lord Roberts's visit to them that day. Everywhere one sees the same hero-worship. Perhaps one of the prettiest sights in the world was to watch Lord Roberts taking his evening walk in front of the Bloemfontein Club. The square would be thronged with people, crowding and pushing,

when Lord Roberts's little figure was seen advancing towards the Club. In an instant, like a body of trained soldiers and quicker than a crowd melts before royalty, this huge body of people would spring back, leaving a large clear pathway for the little monarch. It was curious to watch how, though the square was filled with the most interesting people, the pick of nations, every eye was concentrated on one figure pacing thoughtfully up and down. One could see no one else. It was all so natural—there was no limelight, no seeking to occupy the centre of attention. I have often thought, while standing on the stoep of the Club, of how many of our leading London actors would love to occupy such a position on the stages of their theatres: yet, with all the limelight shining on their chests, and all their dexterous placing, they could never produce the effect that Lord Roberts did in that square at Bloemfontein. His influence over people is quite extraordinary. I have had the chance of talking to Boer Commandoes, Free State farmers, all types of the enemy; and they have all said kind things of Lord Roberts. I have never heard a word against him from any one. Now and then people have criticised Lord Roberts's conduct in relation to South Africa, saying that he is too lenient with the enemy, and that if he had been more severe the campaign would have been shorter. With these critics I totally disagree. The qualities that they complain of in Lord Roberts are just the qualities that have helped perhaps more than any other force to make possible the pacification of the two republics. There is



LORD ALBEMARLE



no living general who could have done his work better than Lord Roberts; and as for his handling of this campaign, it has been the most perfect bit of work possible. He has never shirked his duty; and, now that the campaign is drawing to a close, and one can look back at it to a certain extent in perspective, one realises how stupendous this work has been.

CHAPTER VII

SIR ALFRED MILNER

When I returned to Cape Town from Bloemfontein I was anxious that Sir Alfred Milner should sit for me; but I did not know how to approach him. I tried friends who knew him very well; but somehow or other they were unable to help me. Cape Town just then was full of gaieties: there were so many dinner-parties to attend to that I suppose I should not have expected help. Still, so determined was I to succeed that I took the matter into my own hands, and marched up to Government House one Sunday afternoon, determined to ask the Governor's permission myself. Instantly all difficulties vanished. I was interviewed by an A.D.C., and told that Sir Alfred would be pleased to sit to me. The A.D.C. knew my work, and if I would call the next morning at nine o'clock he would arrange for a sitting in Sir Alfred's own study.

I arrived next morning, carrying my paint-box under my arm, and was shown into an ante-room to await my audience with the Governor. It was a billiard-room—shall I ever forget it? Every minute



SIR ALFRED MILNER



I stayed there made me feel more and more depressed and miserable. It was the typical Government room, uncomfortable and terribly unsympathetic. The walls were hung with sporting prints and caricatures of Sir Alfred Milner and his staff. It was these caricatures that upset me more than anything. They were pictures of men with big heads and little bodies looking like great tadpoles. They seemed an attempt at *Vanity Fair* cartoons, feeble copies of "APE," attempts at clever impressions ; in this case the artist's only idea of a caricature appeared to be a photograph of a man's head attached to a very small body, pictures terrible to live with, enough to throw any one with an artistic soul, obliged to look at them, into the depths of despair. Then, there were trophies, trophies everywhere, barbaric shields nailed to the walls with arrows stuck over the top, guns suspended at ridiculous angles, things for which architecturally there was no excuse.

However, just as my nightmare had reached its summit the A.D.C. entered, and conducted me to the presence of the Governor. As we entered a tall figure rose up from an enormous desk where he had been writing. This cold, quiet, sedate figure in the chilly, icy Government room somehow filled me with a sense of awe, and seemed even more unsympathetic than the caricatures in the ante-room. The great room with its hundreds of books that lined the walls ; the bare tall windows where the light shone in garishly ; the very papers that littered the desk—all were cold and bluey in colour, and even the delicious peeps of sunlight and

green trees that one caught through the windows only served to accentuate the dreariness of the interior. The Governor himself was cool in colour; his thin scholarly face looked like the finest ivory browned with age; his hair was of a silvery colour; his eyes had a glint of steel; his clothing was sad, without a touch of warmth; his very manner was cool, courtly, and polite. When the A.D.C. left us I felt that I also must freeze. Yet there was a touch of sympathy in Sir Alfred himself. When he smiled the change was extraordinary. It transformed the whole face, and made it sweet and gentle. But directly I saw that smile I realised the difficulty I should have in painting Sir Alfred Milner. While as a man I rejoiced at the change, as a painter I was dismayed at the thought of depicting such an expression; and I anticipated much the same difficulty that I had with Mr. Arthur Balfour, for the two men are curiously alike in many ways. I noticed that the colouring of the skin, or rather the lack of colouring, was the same; the quality of the hair, the brilliancy of the eye, the mobile face and expression when talking, the same lack of magnetism and apparent naturalness and certain little eccentricities (such as the crossing of the legs and the doubling up of the body while writing), —altogether Sir Alfred Milner might well be taken for Mr. Arthur Balfour's double. When I mentioned this great similarity to him, he said, "Do you think so? That is strange! I have been told that many times, and by another artist—my dear old friend, the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones."

SIR ALFRED MILNER AT HIS DESK



Sir Alfred Milner

Sir Alfred Milner talked delightfully to me, and his great charm of manner soon weaned me from my unsympathetic surroundings and made me feel myself once more. He talked of my work, which, he said, he knew very well; and, as if to prove his statement, he showed to me a drawing that had been given to him by Lady Edward Cecil as a birthday present. This reassured me, and I was able to talk quite naturally, finding in Sir Alfred a very sympathetic listener. He seemed to be terribly busy. Clerks and A.D.C.s were continually flitting in and out of the room, bringing large bundles of correspondence and laying them on his desk; several people were waiting for an audience in the ante-room; and still he talked on while the pile by his desk mounted higher and higher, until I thought it must surely be impossible for one human being to cope with such a mass. He talked of the war, the Boers, the veldt, all as it seemed to me, in a wonderfully indiscreet manner; but after sketching him several times I realised that in reality he had told me nothing. The moment you enter the room he gauges you, and allows himself only a certain amount of space (as it were) in which to talk. In that space he is perfectly natural and indiscreet; yet never by any chance does he go beyond it, so that after you leave him you discover that it is you who have been indiscreet, rather than he. It is this quality that has made him so successful in his post of High Commissioner.

However, to the portrait! "Now," he said, "how shall I pose?" This with the air of a man who is

prepared to do gracefully that which is distasteful to him. When I said that I would much rather that he did not pose at all, but simply allow me to sketch him working at his desk just as he was, he seemed intensely relieved, and settled down to his work with something like a sigh of relief. All that morning I sat sketching him in his study ; and I begged Sir Alfred to forget my presence entirely, which he very soon did, only looking up now and then to ask some graceful question concerning my work, and even by that slight action creating a new picture which I seized as rapidly as I could. My chief difficulty in painting Sir Alfred Milner was his expression, which varied with every minute : now it was sad, now severe, sometimes with a strange melancholy, but creating every time a totally different picture. He seemed to me a kaleidoscope of subtle expressions, and it was only through dashing off very swift impressions by well-placed lines that I was able to catch the fleeting expressions at all—sometimes with only two or three lines, but all suggestive and natural, and quite enough for my final portrait. As I sketched him I was actually looking from his face to the room, and I marvelled that such a man was able to work among such surroundings, as it seemed a room especially designed to give one the blues—large, unsympathetic, uncomfortably severe, stocked with books from floor to ceiling, nothing but books, books, books. No one but Sir Alfred, who is too absorbed in his work to notice his surroundings, could, I am convinced, stay in such a room for two minutes without realising the hopelessness

MAFEKING DAY AT CAPE TOWN



of it all. Heavens! if he did wake up and look around him, he would make a bolt for England and not stay in South Africa another minute, leaving Cape Colony to take care of itself. However, there he sits at an enormous desk stocked with documents and manuscripts of every description, calmly writing on. What a refined scholarly-looking face it is, so gentle, so kindly, with large impressive eyes rather hidden by glasses—obviously a student, a man who has lived all his life at his desk; there is almost a British Museum air about him—it is impossible to look at Sir Alfred Milner without mentally placing bookshelves as a background. He is quite a tall man—you do not realise how tall until you see him standing by one of his A.D.C.s; for a man who has lived always at his desk, remarkably upright; he walks extremely well, with graceful flowing movements, and when standing, his hands are always well placed, which is rare with students, who are usually so awkward. He is middle-aged with hair just turning grey, very thin and wiry; he has the look of a man who is worn out with care and hard work. His expression in repose is severe, and the face is swept with perpendicular lines which all take the direction of up and down; but the moment he talks, then the change of expression is so marked that it is impossible for a painter to attempt to depict. His manner is kind and gentle, very earnest and tactful, but he does not strike one as being magnetic or sympathetic, and one feels sometimes that he would never be capable of getting out of his own atmosphere —the atmosphere of a student. Sir Alfred kindly gave

me my sittings in his private study, for he was very interested in my work and I used to sit there sketching him while he worked. How he worked! interviewing people all day long, writing despatches—secretaries and A.D.C.s coming in and out in two continual streams with messages and bundles of correspondence. No one in England has any idea how that man works—he is the hardest-worked in all South Africa, for he works not only all day long but half the night as well. Yet, although he is so busy, there were moments during the sittings when we had some very interesting conversation. We often talked of the veldt, which we both decided was indescribable. "That is just where the artist has an advantage over the literary man," declared Sir Alfred, one day; "pigment is possible when suggesting the veldt, but the pen, never." One day, while talking of my work, Sir Alfred remarked that he thought, in my drawing of General Pole-Carew, I had idealised the man too much. "You have drawn an angelic side," he said, "that I cannot see in the General." I was a little hurt for the moment at this criticism, and I believe Sir Alfred noticed it, for he immediately added: "I am hopelessly critical. I believe I am a born critic, for I always see the faults in everything"; and I expressed a fervent wish that he should not criticise his own portrait too severely, or, at any rate, not to tell me too frankly what he thought of it.

One of the best opportunities I ever had for sketching Sir Alfred in different positions was one sunny morning on the steps of Government House, while he



SIR ALFRED MILNER ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE ON MAFEKING DAY



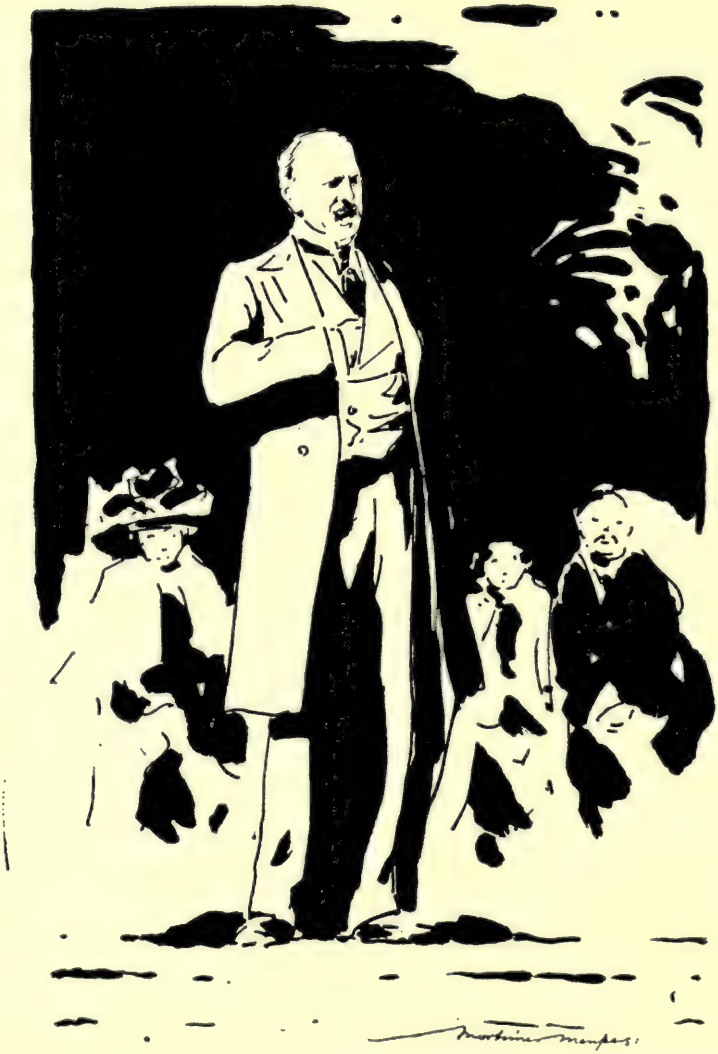
was delivering a speech to the people just after the relief of Mafeking, the day that all Cape Town went mad with joy. He was surrounded by the most extraordinary collection of people I ever saw — a dirty but loyal crowd. Standing quite close to him was a strange soiled little child in a kilt carrying a huge banner, a youngster who always figures in any important function (why, no one knows), who in processions takes the lead in a little cart trimmed with evergreens. The child might, you would think, become conceited in time, holding such an important position, but not, you are sure, if it could only see itself. Another of Sir Alfred's familiars is a dog, a kind of Dandie Dinmont, a strange specimen which whenever the Governor makes a speech always comes at the critical moment and squats itself down at his feet — not at all a pretty dog, but an animal, nevertheless, to whom Sir Alfred is very much attached.

Of course, Sir Alfred and I discussed many topics, and it was only natural that certain features of our more immediate surroundings should have engaged our special attention. For example, just when I was at the Cape, the town was full of smart Society butterflies and gilded young staff officers, to whom a garden-party or a champagne dinner was of infinitely greater moment than the vast tragedy of the front. I mentioned this one day to the Governor, and told him how disgusted I felt—so disgusted that, though I had had many invitations to dinner, I had preferred, during a time of national sorrow, to go quietly to some little out-of-the-

way restaurant, so much like fiddling while Rome burned did the revolting frivolities of Cape Town in early January appear to me to be. Sir Alfred, looking up pale and sad and worn with ceaseless work and watching, thoroughly agreed with me. He told me some of his experiences with the ladies to whom I had referred, which, though troublesome, were sometimes very amusing. He agreed with me that South Africa was not the place for women : in fact, women, he said, gave him a great deal of trouble, especially those who forced their way to the front. There were women in South Africa, he told me, who were doing splendid work, work that would amaze the average woman. "But," he said, "there are thoughtless women too, Society women who travel constantly from place to place without stopping to think that every time they take a journey, say from here to Bloemfontein, it means pilot engines and all sorts of extra precautions, which at a time like this, when every ounce of energy is needed for the great work we have undertaken in South Africa, we can ill afford to spare." And here and there, he told me, women will do extraordinary things. They will insist on going to Bloemfontein at a time when the enemy is rife in the country. "Now," he said very emphatically, "there was one woman who defied the Commander-in-Chief for two hours. She defied him for two hours—two hours,"—he kept repeating it over and over to himself, as though trying to realise the full presumption of it. Then he turned to me, and said, in his quiet way, "Now, Mr. Menpes,



SIR ALFRED MILNER ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CAPE TOWN



can you imagine such a thing possible? Can you imagine any one here in South Africa daring to defy the Commander-in-Chief for two minutes? I can't; but it happened—it's a fact. And it really was preposterous!" "Ladies," I observed, "seem to imagine that this war in South Africa is nothing but a very large circus got up for their amusement"; and then I told him of some ladies I knew at Bloemfontein, who had asked a General if he would mind taking them out and showing them the enemy on kopjes; the General had to refuse, and delicately explain that if they saw the Boers it was just possible that the Boers might see them. "Just fancy," I exclaimed, "attempting to turn the battlefield into a circus!" "Well," said Sir Alfred with a smile, "I have just checked a proposal by a big London firm to turn it into an excursion. They had proposed starting cheap excursions to the various battlefields; but that danger is past—I arrested it immediately. We might then have had even greater trouble than with the women. And, mind you, they proposed these excursions with the war still in progress: that, indeed, was to have been part of the attraction." This idea seemed to amuse him vastly, and we dwelt on it. We pictured these poor dear tourists wandering about on the veldt—ladies digging with their parasols for trophies in the way of bullets imbedded in the ground, or listening to a lecture delivered by their intellectual ringleader and being suddenly surrounded by a party of Boers and whisked off to Pretoria—there was scope here for much amusement.

Sir Alfred was questioning me one morning concerning my different sitters in South Africa, and that led to a very interesting talk on Mr. Cecil Rhodes, whom Sir Alfred distinctly admires, so much so that I sent to him a sketch of the great man, drawn at Kimberley, with which he was delighted. He also inquired how I had got on at the front, and if I had been treated well there. I told him that I had been treated with every courtesy and kindness except on one special occasion. I recounted my experiences with the affected staff officer at Orange River, described in a preceding chapter.

Sir Alfred smiled, and said that he was only too glad to have helped to wipe away such an impression. "But," he continued with a simple generosity that strongly reminded me of Lord Roberts, "you must not be too hard on these staff officers. There is a great difference between the Society drawler, the rather affected gilt-edged superior person you meet at a dinner-party in the town here, and the same man as you will see him a few weeks hence working at the front, where he has been face to face with death or has realised the meaning of the word 'responsibility' in its entirety. I quite agree with Wellington that it is often the dandies who make the best soldiers in the end, and it is just these affected young fellows, who naturally and very properly irritate you to-day, who will perhaps die the gamest or will really best uphold the highest traditions of the British army." In a way, of course, I agreed with the Governor; but at the same time,

SIR ALFRED MILNER ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE



when I compared the idle young fellows as they certainly were while romping about the Cape with the man who had so eloquently defended them, and was literally killing himself with work for his country, I felt thoroughly disgusted.

On my last day in Cape Town, before starting for Ladysmith, I was very anxious to get in another sitting, and Sir Alfred suggested that I should come that night after dinner. "But," I said, "you do not work by artificial light: you will not be here."

Sure enough, there he was when I called that evening, seated at the same desk and working harder than ever. I had expected to get a splendid night effect, thinking that there would probably be an oil reading-lamp on the desk. Instead of that the room was flooded with raw, badly-shaded, incandescent light, making everything look just as blue and unsympathetic as ever. But after a time I forgot my disappointment, and thought only of my subject; and all the light I saw seemed to be reflected from the luminous head of the High Commissioner. This was the last time I ever saw Sir Alfred Milner, and I stayed until late that night, sketching him. He was terribly busy, I remember, for it was just after the relief of Mafeking and on the evening of a very busy day.

That night there was one of the most touching incidents that I have ever witnessed. All the evening clerks and A.D.C.s had been coming in and out in two continual streams with large bundles of correspondence for the Commissioner's superintendence, and the pile of

letters by his side, all to be read that night, was reaching abnormal proportions. Sir Alfred's face was becoming drawn and pale with fatigue, when a wretched clerk came staggering in with a still larger batch, ready to dump it down on the pile, and I felt inclined to shed a tear as Sir Alfred wearily put out his hand and murmured, "Enough—enough!"

SIR ALFRED MILNER AND STAFF



CHAPTER VIII

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CECIL RHODES

It was at the Sanatorium in Kimberley that I first met Mr. Rhodes. The siege had just been raised. I had cut across-country in a Cape cart from Jacobsdal with two correspondents, and had arrived at Kimberley on the heels of General French, dirty and tired, after many unpleasant experiences, having narrowly escaped getting into the Boer lines, and having had to drag the cart along bodily by day and sleep under it by night. We went straight to the Sanatorium, an hotel that Mr. Rhodes had kept up all through the siege for the benefit of his friends, and were welcomed hospitably by Mrs. Maguire and invited to stay to luncheon. I shall never forget that meal, because we had green corn and butter ; and I remember carelessly stroking my butter on my corn, just as I would in London, little realising that I was stroking on gold, for butter at that time was literally worth its weight in gold. I gathered that Mr. Rhodes himself had not suffered very severely from famine, considering that this luncheon was on the last day of the siege, when every one outside the Sanatorium was eating horseflesh,

camels, and siege soup—it would take a bold man indeed to venture a description of what that soup was made of: I know the man who designed it, and he could never be persuaded to divulge the recipe. I sat next Mr. Rhodes during luncheon, and had a good opportunity of studying the great man. That day he seemed bubbling over with mischief, and took a wicked pleasure in quizzing one of his guests, a well-known member of Parliament—he made a regular butt of the poor man, and never seemed tired of trotting him out and making him contradict himself, especially delighting in getting him to talk of his various adventures on land and sea. On one occasion, by very dexterous questioning the poor young man was made to state that he had once ridden 500 miles in two hours. I have lunched with Mr. Rhodes many times; and he is always the same, always getting an immense amount of fun out of one or another of his guests.

When you first see Mr. Rhodes you think "What an enormous man!" He seems to tower above every one else; but, curiously enough, his stature is not over the average. It is the head that is so big,—like the head of some great lion—full of brain and capacity. He is all head—it seems to fill the room. The face is like the face of Nero on a coin—strong and determined, with a mouth like iron. In repose his expression is very severe; but when he is talking the lines of the face turn up and the eyes look down benignly upon you. One realised how those lines could tighten and the blue eyes become like burnished steel, and that at times he



CECIL J. RHODES



could be very formidable indeed. He does not care two straws about his personal appearance, and generally wears a rough tweed coat that seems to have been dragged on through sheer force with the buttons invariably hitched up to buttonholes that were never meant for them, a cobalt blue necktie, and white flannel trousers, which were so conspicuous as to be a great source of worry to his friends in Kimberley, who were in constant terror of his being sniped by the Boers—so much so that they hired a man to follow him at a distance for protection. One day, while on horseback, Mr. Rhodes realised that he was being followed, and led his bodyguard such a chase (galloping all over Kimberley) that the poor man at last sank exhausted on the wayside. Then Mr. Rhodes turned round, and asked him savagely if he "had had enough."

It is difficult to gauge the character of a man like Mr. Rhodes, because there never was a man so full of violent contrast. He is the roughest man possible, and amazingly animal, yet as delicate and sensitive as a school-girl, and strongly spiritual. I have never seen a man look more angry than Mr. Rhodes, and almost at the same moment I have seen tears shining in his eyes. To know the real Rhodes, your thoughts must run parallel with his; otherwise he will close like an oyster. I have spent many days with him in Kimberley. I have seen him in all his many moods. I have learnt to know the man himself, not the rough exterior that he presents to the world; and I have learnt to like him. He is a giant, dwarfing the strongest man—

capable of almost any emotion—capable of any mortal thing.

Mr. Rhodes is a very busy man ; yet he found time to give me many sittings, both in the garden and in his study. He will never be painted other than full-face. He considers that a man looks you straight in the face ; therefore paint him so—no profiles for him. He is palpitating with sympathy, loves Nature and naturalness, loathes hypocrisy, and will never stand affectation in any one. Yet he is a man of many moods, and at times can be almost brutal. I learnt this on several occasions ; but only one was a personal experience. It was several days after that famous luncheon that has always remained in my memory because of the butter and green corn. I had begged the privilege of sketching Mr. Rhodes, and he had very kindly consented ; but, not knowing his little eccentricities, I was rather astonished when, as I took out my paint-box to begin the portrait, he rose in a very dignified way, drew himself up to his full height, and said, " Sir, do you intend to paint me full-face ? If not, you don't paint me at all—unless it is the back of my head." Then he flung himself back in his chair, broadside on, looked me full in the face, and growled, " Now begin." But I did not know how to begin—I was so much upset. However, when I realised that Mr. Rhodes was just as embarrassed as myself, and that a great deal of this roughness was to cover an almost childish shyness, I felt less uncomfortable, and was able to go on with my work : Mr. Rhodes at heart is an exceedingly shy man. Yet how different



COLONEL FRANK RHODES



he was next day when I sketched him in his study at the Sanatorium! We were both talking of growing old. As I sat by this great man and heard him talk, I realised the horror he had of it. I thought of the work he had set himself to do; I realised that he certainly was not getting younger; the pathos of the thing almost overpowered me; and I burst out with, "Rhodes, you'll never be old. Your mind is young, and you are young: you must always be a boy!" I felt I must say so, and I felt I must think so; and I believe I did at the time. Rhodes loved me for it, and kept repeating in an exultant way, "I am a boy! I am a boy! Of course I shall never get old!" He drew himself up, this huge body of his, and said, "I never felt younger."

Then I talked of the romance of life, and at that moment I felt that I could talk of my work as a painter; and Rhodes listened delightfully, simply because my thoughts ran parallel with his. Good Heavens! if they hadn't he wouldn't have listened for a second. "Of course, I am romantic," he said. "Why do I love my garden? Because I love to dream there. Why not come and dream with me in my garden at Kenilworth? Come to-morrow morning!" I went in the morning, and did dream with Rhodes for hours. Yes: certainly it was for hours, for we had no breakfast that morning, I remember. That day no trace of the harsh, imperial Rhodes showed itself, but only the artistic and the sympathetic; and here was this great financier dreaming and loving his garden as only an artist could.

It was then that he talked of that plan of his to plant an avenue, called Siege Avenue, in remembrance of the Siege of Kimberley. It is to be a mile in length, for coaches-and-four to drive through abreast—an avenue of vines covering trellises grown so as to form an arch. On either side of the vines are to be planted pepper trees for the sake of their beautiful berries, orange trees, and eucalyptus—this last to protect the orange and pepper. "What do you think of that?" asked Mr. Rhodes. "Superb!" I exclaimed. "Gorgeous!" Then in the midst of all this beauty a monument is to be erected in memory of the men who fell in the defence of Kimberley, a monument of marvel which Mr. Rhodes described in this way: "It is to be white marble—brilliant white. I thought of using the lion as a scheme of decoration—perhaps lions supporting pillars. Should we have a roof or just a group, a cluster of pillars?" "Before we talk of the roof, Mr. Rhodes, let us talk of the pillars," I said. "You don't seriously intend using the lion as a scheme of decoration? You spring this animal upon me to draw out my opinion as a painter. No: you mean the Sphinx: that creature, with the clear-cut, simple lines, suggests the great Rhodes far more than the curly lion." "Yes: you're quite right," said Rhodes: "it must be the Sphinx." Shortly afterwards, when I arrived at Cape Town, I learnt that Mr. Rhodes had sent his architect, Mr. Herbert Baker, to Egypt to study the Sphinx; and I realised that he had not lost time. We were sitting in his garden that morning, Rhodes and I, drinking in the

CECIL J. RHODES AT GROOTE SCHUUR



beauty of the scene before us, when he suddenly said, "Why do you like my garden so much? Why does it appeal to you?" I said that it was the contrast that appealed to me—the contrast between the vivid green of the garden and the khaki veldt that acted as a background. I said to him, "Take that garden, beautiful as it is, and plank it down in Surrey: it would lose half its charm. I love it because it is a bit of artistic placing. Now, you, Mr. Rhodes, understand the value of placing and contrast." "Yes: you're right," he exclaimed. "That's the word: it's contrast"; and he kept repeating "Contrast! yes, of course: the contrast," until, by the end of the morning, he had said "contrast" at least a dozen times. Next day a friend of mine in Kimberley told me that Mr. Rhodes had got a new word, "contrast." "O yes," I said: "I know."

While I was in Kimberley there were continual quarrels between the volunteers and the regulars over precedence and little technicalities. The regulars held on to the Red Book for dear life; the volunteers, being without a Red Book, had only their common-sense to cling to.

It was in the midst of all these petty quarrels that Rhodes determined to make himself a Colonel; and a Colonel he became. His first field day was characteristic of the man. He appeared, of course, in uniform, but ill-fitting and badly buttoned, and swung himself on to his horse, both legs on one side, and literally sat there as comfortably as a flower-woman might sit on a

kerbstone, and addressed the troops. Never in this world did a man look less like a soldier; yet never was a man more capable. It was very amusing to hear him cross-questioning a soldier, and putting himself in a strong position by saying, "I am only an amateur, you see, and don't understand soldiering"; and then, on the top of that, he would paralyse the man with his real technical knowledge.

During one of the many sittings that Mr. Rhodes was kind enough to give me, he talked very freely of the muddling way in which a great deal of the war was carried on, and especially of the treatment of himself by the military in Kimberley. He told me that he had once inspired an article in a newspaper there. It was a leading article. The military authorities were aroused, and threatened to imprison the editor. Mr. Rhodes suggested that, since he had inspired the article, it would surely be more satisfactory to them to imprison him. He added that it disgusted him to think that this frivolous detail was occupying all the attention of the military when there was very serious work to be done. "Look at the way the Boers are handling 'Long Tom'!" he burst out. "Why, they have got it planked on top of a rubbish heap! Fancy one of our officers thinking of placing a gun on a rubbish heap! He would say it couldn't be done: the Red Book never mentioned anything about rubbish heaps being suitable places for cannons. Pshaw! it's all so narrow and foolish."

A delightful little story of Mr. Rhodes was once

AT PAARL



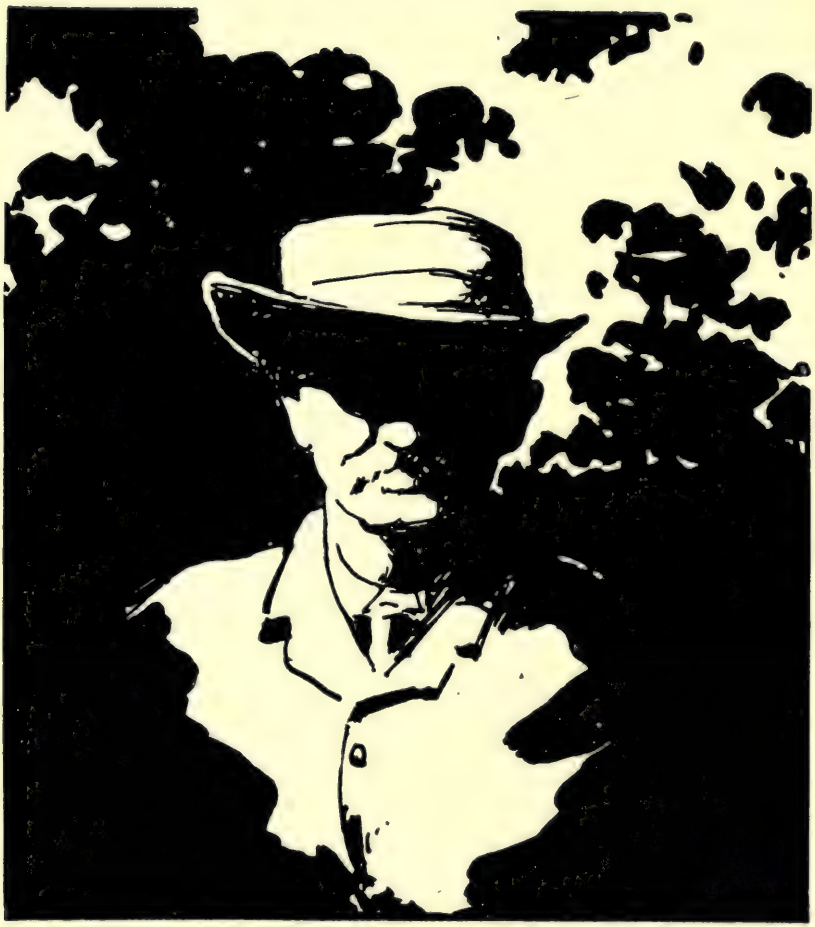
told me by one of his managers—a story that I love to tell, because it shows the gentle and kindly side of Mr. Rhodes, the side of the dreamer and not the morose imperial man that he is so generally depicted. For he is a very rough man, yet tender, sensitive, and jealous: for example, he will never enter the house of one of his farm labourers without being invited beforehand. All his dependants love him, and all have some story to tell of his kindness. He once visited a poor man, during the siege of Kimberley, who was down with enteric fever, and asked if there was anything he could do. The invalid wearily shook his head, and said, "No: I don't care for anything, sir, except a drop of milk; but I know I can't get that"; and indeed milk was an unheard-of luxury in Kimberley just then. Mr. Rhodes said nothing, but came again next day and talked to the man for some time. Just as he was leaving, he cast a furtive look round the room, and, blushing like a schoolboy, took from his pocket a little medicine bottle filled with milk, dropped it on a chair by the bed, and bolted.

He was continually doing this kind of thing, and all over Kimberley you heard of the kindness and generosity of Mr. Rhodes. But, unfortunately, he is not always this delightful man. At times he is terribly hard, almost cruel; now and then it is hard to believe that there is any sensitiveness or kindness in his composition. I once had the privilege of attending a De Beers meeting, the first held after the relief of Kimberley. There was this giant, this romantic financier, handling a

roomful of keen city men and treating them all as if they were babies. His speech was quite a masterpiece, quite different from what one would expect it to be: there was a continuity—it built up and up exactly as you would build up a beautiful picture. There was only one break. That was when Mr. Blank, M.P., interrupted by pointing out some frivolous detail, in connection with an amount being "carried forward," purely technical. The detail had no place in Rhodes's big scheme: so he crushed the M.P. It was amusing to hear the way he launched out about "carried forward." "Carried forward, indeed!" he said. "It is just these 'carried forwards' that are the ruination of half the Company." The way he swept away any interruption was great. Resolutions and amendments bored him to death. He knew what he wanted, and would get at it as quickly as possible, without any hindrance. After the meeting we were all invited to biscuits and champagne. During the repast, one of the members was called away to the Club room below by a friend, a young artillery officer, whom he afterwards brought up to introduce to Mr. Rhodes. He began by saying, "I know Mr. Blank, a near relation of yours, Mr. Rhodes; in fact, he is my great friend, and he——" But Rhodes cut him short by saying, "That man is a loafer. He has left his profession, soldiering, and gone in for riding, walking, and fishing. He is a loafer." The poor artillery officer, thoroughly embarrassed, stuttered out something about having met him in Europe. "Umph!" said Rhodes, "Europe!



CECIL J. RHODES IN HIS GARDEN, KENILWORTH, KIMBERLEY



Monte Carlo, I suppose: still riding, walking, and fishing. No, sir: if you give up soldiering and go in for the same pastimes, you also will become a loafer." Then he turned his back and said no more. There was an awful pause in the conversation. Not a word was spoken, and the poor artillery officer drifted aimlessly out of the room.

Mr. Rhodes keeps open house. Any one is allowed to go at any time, and wander about the grounds; nor is he ever refused to see the interior, or to stay to luncheon or to dinner. Mr. Rhodes himself prefers to dine in an old outhouse, especially if the place is full of smart people. His house at Rondebosch is called Groote Schuur, an old Dutch house that has been renewed by his competent architect at Cape Town, Mr. Herbert Baker,—and well done too. Not very long ago it was burnt down, and (sad to say), a frantic effort was made to save the billiard table while the old Dutch door was allowed to perish. Luckily, a very good imitation of the old door has been found.

No artist besides myself had seen the very beautiful garden at Kenilworth, and Mr. Rhodes was anxious to know what I thought of it. It was in this garden that Mr. Rhodes talked of handling clumps and masses of colour. "I must feel the colour," he said. "You can't overdo the massing of flower in a garden. In fact, in South Africa everything must be done in masses, and you must understand the value of placing. Now, I planned my garden at Groote Schuur to be in sympathy with Table Mountain." "You don't want the typical

suburban garden, then?" I asked. Mr. Rhodes laughed, and fancied himself carefully picking his way in and out of little beds of fuchsia and geranium arranged in geometrical patterns. I went further, and pictured him stepping from the garden into the best parlour, and gently lifting the wax fruit off the family Bible to get at an antimacassar.

Mr. Rhodes talked in a very big way about his animals at Rondebosch and the way they should be seen. He said, "I must have my lions and tigers roaming about in their natural state: I cannot have them cooped up in a little den. I'll wall in an acre or two, and build a marble platform to view them from." He thinks of everything (to use his own expression) in "clumps and masses": everything he does is done in a big way. His colossal mind can grasp big things only. Detail muddles and bores him. He makes a broad plan in which others fill in the details, and he is clever enough to surround himself with men who are capable of doing so. His business manager showed me one of the imperious telegrams he so often receives from his master. It was this: "If you have not sent to Bulawayo those thousand trees which you are keeping in ice for me, I should like you to direct them to Umtali *via* Beira. I also want a man to bring them and plant them. He must be a good man, with large mind—if possible a Californian. I don't want a man who plants fine trees and then faints with the effort. My only fear is that it is too late for this year: the trees will take eighteen days to Umtali. If, however,



GROOTE SCHUUR



there is time, and you can send the man, send three or four thousand trees. Reply sharp, as I will start preparing the land for their planting." Mr. Rhodes sent this telegram from Umtali to his manager at a time when he was laid up with fever, just before the opening of the Bulawayo railway; and twenty-four hours after he received the telegram his manager had the man (with large mind), trees, and all the implements necessary for the work, shipped on board the boat at Cape Town docks—1350 trees all bound for Umtali, and twelve months after only fifteen of them had died.

Mr. Rhodes's way of doing business is quite extraordinary. It is sweeping and to the point: there is no question of price, no unnecessary talk about details that can be attended to by others. If he employs a man, he has absolute faith in that man: woe betide him, though, if he dared worry Rhodes with questions as to the means of carrying out a work! If he orders a town to be built in two months, that town must be built without a question. It is odd to hear him engaging a manager. Rhodes will say, "I want a certain work done," telling the man broadly what he wants: "will you undertake to do it? I give you until to-morrow to think it out in detail. Then you must tell me about how much it will cost me, and what you want for your labour." Next day the man turns up carrying under his arm a huge bundle of elaborate specifications, perhaps almost a book of figures; and, not knowing Rhodes, begins a detailed description of certain items, which the master instantly stops. "Tell me the total cost and your

remuneration." The man tells him, and then launches out again with the explanation that he was burning to get off his mind. "Sir," says Rhodes, in a very dignified way, "I accept your agreements to carry out this work on these conditions. Are you prepared to trust me?" "Of course, yes." "Then, sir, tear up those bundles of papers, and get to work at once." And the man who gets to work and treats Rhodes fairly never has reason to regret it.

Before leaving Cape Town for England I ran down for a few days to one of Mr. Rhodes's fruit farms at Paarl. He had talked so much about them that I was curious to see what they were like. The manager of this farm, Mr. ———, showed me over the estate and spoke a great deal of Mr. Rhodes and his methods; and I soon began to realise the magnitude of the work that this great man is doing in South Africa. These fruit farms cover an immense tract of country, and cost fabulous sums to buy: the regal way they are handled is simply splendid. This manager was telling me that, before the outbreak of the war, he was showing Mr. Rhodes over the farm, when suddenly the master pointed to a large space of ground, and said, "Have a village built there for my Kaffir labour. Begin it at once." Nothing more. When Mr. Rhodes came back to Paarl after the Relief of Kimberley, the manager was privileged to show him the village finished in a few months. Rhodes looked at it, and said, "Good! Build me another hundred houses."

This cluster of farmhouses, with their red walls and cool green shutters, is extremely picturesque. In



RHODES'S FRUIT FARM AT PAARL



fact, the scenery in this spot is really the most beautiful in the whole of South Africa; everything is cool in colour and seems to suggest silver. The rose trees, the mountains in the distance at any time of the day, the violets and the greens, the very trees, are so cool in colour that even the eucalyptus is in sympathy with them. And this exquisite silver background harmonises with the pearly white of the Dutch houses and their brilliant cool green shutters. In the middle of the orchard of apple trees rises the home of Mr. Rhodes's manager, a house not only perfect outside, but inside too, with its old oak furniture and fine Dutch iron and silver, all of the right period, all beautiful in design and arranged with the most perfect taste. It was in this house—an ideal spot for a poet—that Mr. Kipling once stayed with Mr. Rhodes; and small wonder that its great beauty moved him. The name of the house was "Lekkerwijn" (a fruit farm), and this is the delightful little poem which Mr. Kipling composed, to be carved on its oaken mantelpiece :—

"*This the blossom of the fruit.*"
I cleared the land, I set the trees;
I led the water down the sluit.
Earth gave me fiftyfold increase—
This is the blossom of the fruit.

One morning early—for Mr. Rhodes is in the habit of rising early—the Union Jack was hauled down from the flagstaff, probably by rebels; and the manager was so afraid lest Rhodes's keen eye should notice its absence that he hurriedly begged the privilege of showing

him round the farms before breakfast. Mr. Kipling, who was in a dreamy mood, stayed behind. But dreaminess soon gave place to hunger. As time went on, the flag was hoisted, and Mr. Rhodes did not appear. Mr. Kipling wanted his breakfast. On their way home Mr. Rhodes and his manager were surprised to come across, on every tree and gate they passed, huge placards, bearing in bold black type such inscriptions as "Famine!" "We are starving!" "Feed us!" This continued until they reached the front door, where they found written in still larger type :—

FOR THE HUMAN RACE
BREAKFAST
Tones the mind—invigorates the body,
It has sustained thousands—it will sustain
YOU
See that you get it.

Then, in the house, on every available door and wall, they came across these mysterious placards, becoming stronger and stronger, until "Why die when a little BREAKFAST prolongs life?" caught their gaze as they turned down a passage; "It is LATE"; "It is still LATER"; until at last they came to the little morning-room, where they found Mr. Kipling reading his paper, looking innocent but very hungry. It was all, of course, the work of the great poet.

Mr. Rhodes's favourite flower is the passion flower, and wherever it is possible he will always have long trellises of it. In the Avenue at Kenilworth he has the flower growing in great abundance. When this



DUTCH FARMHOUSE ON RHODES'S ESTATES, PAARL



same avenue was being planned, one of his managers was anxious to know whether he proposed it to be fifty or a hundred yards long. "Make it a mile," Mr. Rhodes answered, simply.

A curious fact about Mr. Rhodes is that whenever he is cornering a man and putting a few pertinent questions, he talks in a high falsetto treble; I noticed that this was always the case when he was particularly interested in anything. Everything Mr. Rhodes does is done with vigour and determination—the way he eats his food, as though he is not enjoying it; the way he gets up and walks out of the room when the conversation does not interest him; the determined jerky way he crosses his legs, so that you are almost afraid he will throw off a joint. He is extremely impetuous. One day, while he and Mr. Kipling were looking over the farms, they came across a most exquisite view, one of the most wonderful on the estate, a scene that suggested Turner in its broad expanse. Just in front of this beautiful piece of Nature, blocking out a portion of it, stood three apple trees, which from Mr. Rhodes's point of view harmed the picture. In a moment he wanted to sweep them away. He pulled and tore at them, with no result; and then screamed out for a chopper. His manager ran to the nearest little cottage; but found the door locked, and came back and told Mr. Rhodes that there was no chance of getting implements to cut down the trees. Rhodes, determined not to be baffled, swept him aside, flew to the cottage, and hammered and kicked at the door; then screamed

for a crowbar to force it open. So eager was he to exterminate the apple trees, in the end through sheer force he broke open the door, fetched an old rusty chopper, and with his own hands cut them down. Mr. Kipling all this time was sitting quietly on a boulder, watching the performance; and when Mr. Rhodes, tired out with his exertions, sank down on the bank and expressed his complete satisfaction by saying, "Now we can see this beautiful view," he crept quietly along towards a little soiled piece of rag that was lying on the ground, and tied it on to a branch of one of the fallen trees. Then as quietly he crept back to his seat on the boulder, and murmured to himself exactly what Rhodes had said a minute ago: "Now I can see this beautiful view." Mr. Rhodes turned round, looked at him with a blank expression, and asked him what he was talking about. Mr. Kipling simply pointed to the rag dangling from the end of a bough, and said, "That soiled rag that you see is a blot on the landscape. Without it the scene would be too perfect, and I couldn't have enjoyed it. In life we mustn't have perfection. We must always have a blot,—and that is my blot." The idea of having "blots" to distract one's attention from a beautiful picture seemed to grow on Mr. Kipling, for when he got back to the farm where they were all staying he suggested that a vicious red plush curtain with gold tassels should be hung in an opening leading from the old Dutch kitchen to the hall, to be a blot, giving value to this beautiful Dutch interior. But the manager said he preferred to live without the blot.

RHODES'S FARM



CHAPTER IX

PERSONALITIES

South Africa, when I was in it, seemed to be the centre of the British Empire. All the most distinguished men of Great Britain were gathered together there, to do their very best work for their country's good. It was really a splendid illustration of the energy of the Empire to see the way these great men had put on one side their own important work in order to rally round the British flag and to fight for their country, each in his own separate way. They were men of all walks in life—doctors, writers, clergymen, peers—and I will endeavour to give a few slight character sketches, mere passing glimpses, of a few of the distinguished men whom I had the privilege of meeting in South Africa.

For example, what a splendid thing it was to see the Duke of Norfolk, the premier peer of England, going about his little bit of work in such a simple earnest way! But perhaps there never was a man who looked less like a duke than the Duke of Norfolk dressed in khaki—tall, with thick limbs, clumsy figure,

looking altogether rather like a loose-limbed Newfoundland dog. He has a long black beard that somehow strikes one as having an unkempt look, while his whiskers seem as if they had been stuck on in ragged tufts, not as if they had grown there naturally—and stuck on in the wrong place, too. He has a splendid character, and is very kind and generous; one could see that by the way he entered into the sports and amusements on board ship. The Duke on the boat was different from the Duke as a campaigner; he seemed more at home, and was loved by every one. He was so full of energy, and was always, even in the hottest weather, occupied with getting up athletic sports and amusements for the passengers, acting as a judge, although he knew nothing about it. A friend of mine, who held the tape with him for one of the races, told me that the Duke never by any chance knew who had won, and always asked him who had come in first, second, or third, enthusiastically clapping the winner. In fact, the Duke so entered into the spirit of the thing that he got up a fancy-dress ball, and came to it himself dressed as a miner; which suited him exactly. He looked the typical Australian that you see in a red flannel shirt and a slouch hat, with his long beard and dark complexion; the choice showed his great experience and knowledge of the fitness of things.

Then, there was the Duke of Marlborough. I was impressed by the manner in which this pleasant-faced, dignified, and yet very boyish-looking man, utterly forgetful of his commanding rank, would go about his duties



DUKE OF NORFOLK



as a captain of yeomanry, or as an A.D.C. to the Commander-in-Chief, with the simple ardour of a subaltern. It was rather splendid, when one thinks of what such a man might have been doing had he chosen, to see with what earnestness and devotion he went out to the front, to do his share in helping the country in her hour of difficulty.

What a fine soldier was Prince Francis of Teck! In what a capable workmanlike way he took over the superintendence of the Remount Department! Many a time have I met Prince Francis, and that under various conditions; but I have always found him working like a Trojan. There was no affectation about him. He was simply a good fellow and a splendid soldier, who was doing a work that he happened to be exactly fitted for, and filling a position which no commoner, however carefully chosen, could have filled with more successful results.

I well remember my first glimpse of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. I was travelling from Bloemfontein to Cape Town, and we had stopped at the little station called Edenburg. I was strolling up and down the station, noting colour and shadow and lines of perspective, when I suddenly became aware of an atmosphere of muddle and excitement. A portmanteau flew past my head; I dodged it rapidly; another followed, and then came a big canvas bag. I looked up, wondering what was the matter. A short, sturdy, spectacled young man, clad in the inevitable khaki, and with a great flourish and bustle, jumped out of the railway carriage

and began hauling away at the luggage which he had recklessly strewn upon the platform. A whisper went round the assembled crowd, "It's Kipling," and a number of willing hands seized hold of the flying baggage. Mr. Kipling himself flew after soda-water bottles and various eatables, collected an armful, and rushed down to a carriage where were sick and disabled Tommies, all hot and weary. Mr. Kipling was busy, with that wonderful sympathy of his, attending to his beloved Tommies, and all this without affectation or desire for notice, bent only on meeting their immediate wants. I realised then how it was he had so thoroughly got into their life and seized hold of their hearts. He had a startling face, rather pale features, black eyebrows tremendously developed, a black moustache, three blobs in vivid contrast to the pallid face, a face that attracted by its power, its strength and determination, keen, vivid, original. He lived much in the hospital. He would go into a ward, throw himself on a sick man's bed; and instantly he would be friends with that man, learning his history, getting at his life, sympathising with his troubles, laughing and joking, perhaps writing a letter for the wounded man.

There was also Dr. Conan Doyle, whose splendid work at Langman's Hospital, Bloemfontein, will live for ever in the minds of hundreds of men. We talked of Sherlock Holmes, which I was amazed to hear Dr. Doyle declare to be not a good work. "Why, Sherlock Holmes was merely a mechanical creature," he exclaimed,

RUDYARD KIPLING



—"not a man of flesh and blood,—and easy to create because he was soulless. One story by Edgar Allan Poe would be worth a dozen such." Curiously enough, in real life the Doctor has no capacity for detecting anything, and he was quite amazed at my "cuteness" in discovering a missing dot on a V.R.I. stamp. He told me that the detective story he liked best was the one about the serpent; he could not for the life of him remember its title. He has no faith whatever in the professional critic. He prefers the child's views, fresh and sincere. "I want the boy critic," he exclaimed, "the boy who will chuck a book down and call it 'rot,' or will read it through twice and call it 'ripping,'—that's the person I want to criticise my work. And do you know," he added, "the book that appealed to me the most as a boy of fifteen was *The Cloister and the Hearth;* yet, curiously enough, it is the book that I enjoy the most to-day." In talking of books, plots, and critics, Dr. Doyle mentioned casually that he always fixes the end of his story before he begins to write, and he gave a very clever little illustration of the advisability of this course. Suppose you know that a pin lies in a Japanese vase on the top of a shelf. You can weave an amazingly exciting story round the finding of that pin, and would brave anything to find it; but if you don't know that it is there, all brigandeering is gone, and you find yourself running into pillar-boxes and all sorts of quaint obstructions. Dr. Conan Doyle is tall, with a heavy figure, fair, looking more like a typical country squire than a man of letters. He talks slowly

and deliberately; but on the whole he is cleverer as a listener than as a talker. I should gather from what I saw of him that he is a man who would be always misplacing things through want of method. For example, I have seen him put a letter carefully into his breast pocket, and two minutes later search diligently for it in another. But the thing that strikes you most forcibly when first meeting Dr. Doyle is the big heart of the man.

Among the correspondents there was Mr. Winston Churchill. What is there that has not been said about him? One has heard that he is this, that, and the other; that he was a tornado, a storm bird, a young man in a hurry; that he was a calm phlegmatic person, with an iron will and an audacious heart. I myself found him a very sympathetic individuality; not arrogant, not an egoist, but a good listener, and modest. Yet one can hardly affirm that he always speaks modestly. He doesn't, perhaps. But his atmosphere is not conceited —what boys call "cocky." He is interested in outside things; his praise of other people is unstinted; and he is quite ready to retire into the background and listen to any one's conversation—if it is interesting. If it is not—well, I think it might chance to be speedily interrupted. At first, Mr. Churchill strikes one as being in a great hurry. His movements are quick; his manner is brisk and determined, and even a little brusque. At moments he falls into silence and apathy, until one touches upon a subject that interests him deeply, when he bursts out into a torrent of eloquent



WINSTON CHURCHILL



and enthusiastic conversation. He talks brilliantly, in a full clear voice, and with great assurance. He can be either epigrammatic or sarcastic, and is often both. I should say that he is more brilliant as an orator than as a conversationalist. At times, even in solitude *à deux*, he seems to be addressing a large audience, or a deputation meekly waiting upon him to learn his views. I have heard him talk upon almost every subject—South Africa, the War, his escape from Pretoria —all with the greatest ease and facility, but not carelessly. I noticed that his conversation is never careless. Any question put to him that he has not thought out leads him to ask a series of other questions, and his expression clearly shows that he is all curiosity on this point; he deliberately weighs all the pros and cons, and sounds the ground around his subject before attempting to answer, which testifies to his thoroughness. But the moment that he feels he is able to answer, his expression changes, and he speaks in an almost flippant manner, giving his views in an apparently careless way, but with the greatest assurance. You feel that he has decided that question once and for ever, and that all the King's horses and all the King's men could not move him. He is a curious combination of hyper-sensitiveness and rather ordinary placidity. His face is nervous, clean-shaven, with a firm mouth and chin; he is fair, rather inclined to the gold than the silver; and his head droops forward slightly, as though it was too heavy to hold upright. His countenance wears rather a grave expression; it is

purely intellectual, and has a slight resemblance to that of Lord Rosebery. The rest of him is rather short, broad-shouldered, almost stubby; perfectly still and tranquil. Altogether his face—or is it his body?—seems to belong to some one else. His frame makes you think that he is a little apathetic; but his face decides you that he is alert and wide-awake, and it is just the same with his manner. By his conversation you would think him perhaps a little too well pleased with himself; but by his actions you are quite sure that deep down he is modest. He is always dressed with care and precision; his clothing, whether khaki or broadcloth, is of the latest fashion, and remarkable only for its great simplicity; he wears nothing that would compel attention. His hands are of a very good shape, and, like few men, he knows exactly how to hold them. Mr. Churchill is very energetic when he talks of the Army Chaplains at the front; for they have splendid chances of doing a really magnificent work, but, as a rule, they are without capacity. Mr. Churchill maintains that this is wrong. Just as good men should be sent out to represent the Church at the front as those who represent the medical profession. "We send our surgeons," he says,—"the biggest of them,—why should we not send our great preachers? No: I maintain it, and I will say it again and again: it is wrong to send out a lot of illiterate, dull people to represent the Church, and there is not an audience in Great Britain that would not be with me if I made that statement." When Mr. Churchill speaks of South Africa he does so



LIEUT.-GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD



with intense appreciation and enthusiasm. "South Africa," he says, "is superb. Surely the wonderful pictures which have been painted of a cultivated, luxuriantly-flowering country should testify to its beauty; and can they be dastardly enough to say that this place, which we are pouring out our blood for, is nothing but a barren land?" Mr. Churchill is a man who might be unpopular because of his great cleverness. He is too direct and frank to flatter, and would never consent to efface himself in order to give added and unmerited value to the quality of others. On the whole, he struck me as a man who, in certain circles, might be termed unpopular, and accused of an arrogance which, to any but a jaundiced vision, would appear for what it undoubtedly is, frankness and perfect manliness.

Another frank and manly man is Hector Macdonald. Two miles out of Bloemfontein, General Hector Macdonald might have been seen almost any day outside his tent with his men. What struck me most about this General was his dislike of luxury. He is a strongly built man, a little above the average height, with closely cropped hair just turning gray, showing the splendidly proportioned skull. He is every inch a soldier. His sympathies are with the private, and he prefers to rough it on the ground rather than enjoy, as other officers did, the comparative luxury of Bloemfontein. His conversation is deliberate and slow, with a certain amount of hesitation, as though he were choosing his words, not for diplomatic reasons, nor

with a struggle to impress, but because of a determination to be accurate. The first thing the General said to me was, "We want blood; we want blood"—for he thinks that we have been too lenient in many ways; he says that until we touch the homes the war will drag on. "The work in Egypt," he said, "was simply child's play as compared with that in South Africa. There we had to contend with difficulties of the country and transport; here we have to contend with the same difficulties, but also with an amazingly capable enemy." "Now, how far do you think that kopje is off?" he suddenly asked me, pointing to a hillock which appeared quite close, but was really some miles off. I was aware of the deceptive nature of the country, and said so. "Well," continued the General, "you would think it was an easy thing for me to take my brigade there,—wouldn't you? And it looks flat country between us,—doesn't it? Yet ten thousand Boers could conceal themselves in that wavy plain. I'll tell you what it is," said he, in a soldierly way. "I trust nobody in Bloemfontein: not men—certainly not women. What I do is to stuff my pockets full of sweets, go out for a walk, and talk to the children; for we can't depend on any news we get, we have no local scouts, the whole population is against us, all deceive us; in fact, the only information that I can get here in Bloemfontein is by bribing these little children with sweets. Then, what is the information worth when you have got it? You give a little child a box of bonbons, and it will tell you that 'Papa

THE HIGHLANDERS MARCHING THROUGH BLOEMFONTEIN



has gone for a long walk.' Now, how on earth is the news that papa has gone for a long walk to help one on in one's career as a General?"

Macdonald's tent, where we were talking, seemed to be thoroughly typical of the man. It contained literature, decorations, everything that reminded one of a healthy-minded soldier. The illustrated papers (and there were many) were nearly all Australian; they appealed to him, he said, because of their actuality. He talked of the constant inaccuracy and folly of the illustrated London papers, so greatly inferior to the frank photographs that appear in the Australian journals. One English paper that he found some excuse for was *Black and White*. That tent of his was neatness itself. It had no outward show, nothing but what was useful; and everything was in its place, the only bit of colour being a curtain of varied oriental hues—Egyptian—which screened off his bathroom. He talked to me of the C.I.V. men as compared with the Australians, and he was of opinion that the City Volunteers wanted a few more months of work. They were liable, he says, to work their horses too much—from want of habit. Just as we were talking, a company of his brigade passed by in their new kilts. He proudly pointed them out to me as he exclaimed, "Just look at them: aren't they a splendid set of men?" I heartily agreed. They certainly did look splendid after visions of nothing but soiled soldiers for so long. We talked of the Boers. Although Macdonald cannot possibly be called a Pro-Boer, the Boers have no keener

admirer of their fighting qualities. I inquired of him if he did not think their religious enthusiasm helped them as fighters. The General did not seem to think it did; but he told me that he had had a talk that morning with a sergeant of his brigade, an old Scripture reader, who had said, "O sir, it's an awfu' thing to fight a God-fearing people." General Macdonald expected severe fighting before the war was over.

It was also at Bloemfontein that I had the privilege of meeting General French, who, I should say, is quite the shyest man in the British Army, and looks less like a cavalry officer than any one I ever saw. He is a heavy man, always looking half-asleep—although who is there more wide-awake?—has a warm-toned complexion, grey moustache, thick-set figure,—the last personality in the world to help an artist as a sitter. In fact, he would rather face a legion of Boers than my palette. He promised to sit for me, although, characteristically, he could not for the life of him think what he had done to be of sufficient interest for any one to want to sketch him. At last, after a great deal of trouble, I persuaded him to sit to me one morning just outside the Club at Bloemfontein. He was the shyest sitter I ever had, but charming. The sitting was the shortest and most disjointed that I have ever known. The General sat upright in a chair, reading his paper upside-down through sheer nervousness; and, if he left that chair once, on one excuse or another, he left it a hundred times, coming back looking still more



LIEUT.-GENERAL FRENCH



thoroughly upset and wretched than before, until at last he never came back at all. My only chance of sketching him was at the Club during dinner.

Then, there was General Pole-Carew. It is difficult to talk about him without feeling inclined to write a whole book. I camped and marched with the Guards Brigade for so many months that I had every chance of studying this brilliant man. General Pole-Carew is the handsomest man in the Army, and, I should think, one of the Generals with the greatest common-sense. He always wears a seraphic smile; Sir Henry Irving's is the only smile I know that can approach it. The Guards Brigade under General Pole-Carew has changed: his men simply worship him. He is a middle-aged man with a complexion that any girl would covet, it is so fresh and clear; his hair is just beginning to turn grey; he is not tall, but well-preserved. He is a smart, dapper fellow, without a speck of dust on his boots. Even in the midst of battle, he is always smart. His tent was the picture of neatness; only, curiously enough, he never would sleep in it at night; he always preferred an old Cape cart, where you might see him at night, uncomfortably bent up in a corner. No one in camp seemed to understand this eccentricity. General Pole-Carew was one of the few officers who shaved every day in camp. Every morning regularly he was to be seen outside his tent, carefully shaving and giving orders at the same time. He was always well-mounted; in fact, Lord Roberts and he were the

best-mounted Generals in South Africa. Every one liked General Pole-Carew,—he had such charming, lovable manners. Before he started for South Africa, his doctors told him that he was very delicate, and advised him to give up his work, as being physically unfit for it. He did not take his doctors' advice: with the result that he is now a strong man, and the head of his Division. Perhaps no officer is capable of doing more brilliant work than he is; for he possesses the qualities which are so essential to the making of a General—power of gaining the affection of his men without losing their respect, of never losing his temper, and of being absolutely without affectation. The Guards Brigade seemed to become imbued with his spirit, and were cheerful amid the most trying circumstances. I have heard singing and laughter in the midst of a hailstorm in the evening, when the men were without tents and wet to the bone, with no hope of getting dry until the sun should shine next day. No men marched as well as the Guards during that now historic march to Bloemfontein. On one occasion they marched forty miles with a rest of only a few hours, and then fought a battle. I saw them at the end, dog-tired but cheerful, with never a word of complaint. One good point about the General is that he can always tell a funny story without being unnecessarily Rabelaisean—rather a rarity with Generals in my experience. I once had tea with him and his staff in the garden of a Dutch farm, a perfect bower of roses; and it seemed so strange to see these men drinking out of delicate

LIEUT.-GENERAL POLE-CAREW IN HIS ROSE GARDEN AT BLOEMFONTEIN



china cups in a rose garden after being on the veldt munching the hardest of hard tack. The owner of the place had been struck three times by lightning; the third time ten horses attached to a cable were struck, and died; so he said to himself, "God is against us," and took up his abode for the time somewhere else, giving his cottage and his roses up to "Polly" and his staff.

Among the younger men in the service I came closely in touch with Colonel Maxse and Major O'Meara, both, in different directions, quite brilliant. Colonel Maxse is undoubtedly one of the most distinguished young officers in the British Army. He is capable, alert, full of enthusiasm, with the power of throwing his energies into the subject that requires his immediate attention. No matter what Colonel Maxse undertakes, he always carries it through in a masterly way, never sparing himself. His grip of detail is quite extraordinary, and (what is more important than all) he is ever ready to learn; in fact, he was one of the few men that I met who seemed to treat soldiering as a life's work. General Baden-Powell's work in South Africa as Chief Commissioner of Police in Pretoria will be considerably lightened by the splendid foundation laid by Colonel Maxse. In the future, when one looks back and talks of the brilliant work done by General Baden-Powell in connection with the police in South Africa, there are many who will always remember how enormously his success was helped by this young officer. The exposure

of the plot to murder Lord Roberts was worked out solely by Colonel Maxse. They say that the network that he threw round these people was simply wonderful: they were arrested one by one and thrown into prison, without one of the culprits knowing that his comrade was arrested. The Colonel's memory is prodigious; he has a mastery of detail that is scarcely rivalled even by Lord Kitchener himself.

Major O'Meara has justly earned his high position in South Africa. He is at the present time occupying the position of Burgomaster at Johannesburg. For some time before the war this enterprising officer was doing splendid work, surveying roads and gaining general information. He learnt to survey roads at the rate of six miles an hour. It was a quaint sight to see the Major riding a bicycle, with a vicious-looking yellow-backed novel tucked under his arm, the margins of which were smothered with notes and plans. These novels he often used as a safeguard, lest they should be taken by the Transvaal Government. If it were not for Major O'Meara's exceptional modesty, he would at the present moment occupy a position much higher in South Africa than he does. He is certainly one of the strongest officers we have. His personal bravery is vouched for by the fact that he has more wounds than any man in the British Army. His body is one mass of scars; his face and hands are cut all over. As an Intelligence officer he is supreme. All the ridiculously hampering system of the War Office has failed to kill his natural aptitude. He is a live man



MAJOR O'MEARA



who uses his great gifts to signal purpose. The public has already had cause, in his discovery of Hans Cordua's plot, to rejoice over the fact that at the head of the Intelligence Department in South Africa is a man who is not afraid to leave the beaten track of book-taught methods and strike out on lines of his own. Very much what General Baden-Powell was as a scout, was Major O'Meara as an Intelligence officer. And it is not merely as an Intelligence officer that Major O'Meara shines: he is an *intelligent* officer in the highest, best, and widest sense of the word, and he can do the work of a dozen men. At Kimberley he was the Director of Telegraphs and Telephones, Chief Intelligence Officer, Press Officer, Provost-Marshal, Chief Staff Officer, and member of the Summary Court of Jurisdiction. He slept in his clothing during the siege of Kimberley. Dronfield Battle was won by him six miles away. At Bloemfontein, where he was C.I.O., he was responsible for the working of the Post Office, drew up proclamations, and organised the police force. Before the war broke out he was surveying the country, and was often suspected by our own people of being a Boer spy. His adventures would make a more amazing book than any work of fiction. His sole fault is modesty.

General Wavell has a great sense of humour; he is one of the most sympathetic men I know. I travelled with him on the ship going out. We became good friends. At Jacobsdal I saw him in the midst of his administrative work. One afternoon I was sitting in his

room when he interviewed local men—many scoundrels I am sure, and some liars. The General's sympathetic manner misled these people: they imagined that he could be easily led. It was a study to watch the change in their expressions as the strength of the General gradually dawned on them. Nothing would turn General Wavell from the course laid down as right. He is as firm as man can be, and just. He is the one soldier I have met who seems to appreciate the power of the psalm-singing Boer, and he realises to the full the value of using a force so strong as religious enthusiasm.

Lord Algernon Gordon Lennox—an extremely smart man, with a grey moustache, square-cut chin, showing great firmness of character, ruddy complexion, and slight figure—is a typical staff officer. For many years he was on the Duke of Cambridge's staff, and travelled out on the s.s. *Briton* to South Africa, where he was given an appointment on Sir Alfred Milner's staff.

One of the most interesting characters out in South Africa was my dear friend the late Admiral Maxse, of whom it is impossible to say too much. It was by his great influence and kindly help that I was enabled to secure for sitters such interesting persons as Lord Roberts and Sir Alfred Milner, and that things were made possible for me in my career as a painter in South Africa. How wonderfully that courtly old-world figure outlined itself against the tainted social atmosphere of Cape Town and Bloemfontein! Cape Town, with its painful frivolity and incapacity to appreciate the tragedy

LORD ALGERNON GORDON LENNOX



of the times; Bloemfontein, with its surging to and fro, its intrigues, its meannesses, its jealousies, and its narrow purview—the old Admiral, calm and dignified, clear in his judgment, was a standing protest against the shallowness and spitefulness of that unthinking mass of humanity.

CHAPTER X

JOURNALISM IN THE FIELD

It was not until we reached Bloemfontein that that distinguished body of men, the newspaper correspondents, first burst upon our delighted vision—the correspondents to whom the British Public owes so great a debt, and to whose powerful imaginations are due the brilliant descriptions of battles which were never fought, of guns which were never fired, and of shells which never burst.

Far be it from me to cast doubt upon these gentlemen; but I must say that I have never seen a correspondent surrounded by bursting shells. Yet, from what I had read of him in his own accounts of himself, I had pictured him ever in the thick of the fight, ever in the face of imminent danger; I had come naturally enough to the conclusion that Generals were not only absolutely unnecessary, but also in the way on the field of battle, for, as any one knows who has studied the records of many recent wars, it is almost invariably a special correspondent who leads the troops on to victory, or directs great operations, or comes to the rescue of



A SHELTER AT LADYSMITH



Field-Marshals. Thus it was with a mind charged with the glamour of these heroic deeds that I went out to South Africa; and so, therefore, when I first caught a glimpse of these distinguished men grouped together —I understood that they rarely forsook one another's congenial society—I felt a thrill of patriotic enthusiasm. I am bound to add that closer knowledge led to a slight modification of my dreams concerning them. The usual war correspondent, in strange contrast to the vivid pictures he so frequently drew of himself in the columns of his own journal, did not appear to me as a rule to be troubled by the noise and inconvenience of bursting shells; nor, so far as I could see, was he unduly attached to the precincts of the battle-field. More than one, indeed, was not too proud to accept the shelter of an underground cave, whence—to his power of imagination be all the credit—he would send remarkably thrilling sketches of the great battles he had not witnessed and the charitable draughts of brandy he had not poured down the throat of the Commander-in-Chief. I learnt to love these dear men for the recitals of the hardships which they had never undergone and the great patience which they never failed to exhibit during close confinement to a limited area of sheltered ground. The chief thing that struck me in Bloemfontein about the correspondents was the way they grouped themselves. They formed violent friendships, often going to the length of slinging tarpaulin from one cart to the other so as to form a link between them. But this never lasted. They would quarrel over a jam-

pot or a battle, and next day found them widely separated. The groups were for ever changing. It fascinated me to watch them. I often asked an American friend what the relations were between two sworn comrades of the previous day, and the answer was invariably the same: "Wal, I guess they've hauled the tarpaulin in." But there was one couple who kept together through the whole campaign. I was continually watching them, anxious to get to the bottom of this extraordinary phenomenon. It piqued my curiosity so much that I could bear it no longer, and boldly asked one of the pair, a delightful young fellow, the reason of their constancy. "Well," he said, "I will tell you exactly how it is. I chose as travelling companion a man who was absolutely opposite to me in every particular. We are blank to one another. We never talk, we never exchange views, we have nothing in common; and therefore we never quarrel." Besides this couple I noticed two other types of men who never parted from one another—namely, the war artist and the war correspondent. They suited one another to perfection. While one described his companion in the midst of bursting shells, the other sketched him in that uncomfortable but gloriously conspicuous position. And so it always was: when two correspondents found that they could be of any use to each other they clung together through thick and thin. Of course, among so many men there were innumerable differences of opinion and ways of thought; but they had decided upon one thing, in which they were united



TRANSPORT ON THE WAY TO LADYSMITH



as by a solemn oath, and that was never by any chance publicly to mention one another's work. Such was the horror of self-advertisement where others were concerned!

At this period in Bloemfontein the correspondents had gained the reputation somehow or other of always being "in the know." Every man got hold of his own particular and choice bit of news, which it was the object of his life not to disclose to a soul. He went about jealously hugging his precious "copy," now and then letting out hints in a mysterious air which whetted one's curiosity and sent one flying in terror to the General, to ask him to tell for Heaven's sake what was going to happen, for so-and-so insinuated that we were on the verge of some great event. The General would raise his eyebrows, and, softly ejaculating "Indeed!" pass on his way. A correspondent whom I met at the front spent two hours in trying to explain to me how it was that Mr. Kruger and Mr. Steyn had escaped. To illustrate his meaning, he drew an elaborate map of the whole situation, showing the sweep of the river with a decorative wave pattern to point out the direction of the current, including endless spots, arrows, and darts—in fact, it was a masterpiece. I never knew from that day to this how Mr. Kruger eventually did escape; but it struck me that there must be something remarkable in a map that left you absolutely fogged after two hours' conversation. So I learnt it off by heart; and now if any of my friends are puzzled about anything and want it cleared up, no

matter what it is, I always draw my map, which covers the situation.

In South Africa a General would often come up to me (such was the faith placed in correspondents) and ask me, who have no habits of war and never did have a lucid moment at all in relation to military matters, if I could enlighten him concerning a certain situation. "Yes," I would answer without a moment's hesitation: I can"; and, beckoning him to be seated, would begin, with great dignity and importance, to draw my map. With a pathetic struggle to look intelligent, the General would follow the sweep and curves of my everlasting river, frowning over the darts and arrows, and would finally end up by saying, "Yes: pretty serious!" and go away to think it out. There was no end to the capacity and adaptability of this map of mine. I always used it when in difficulties as to localities. Intelligence officers, artillery officers, local men—all were impressed by it, and all said, "Ha, now we understand!"

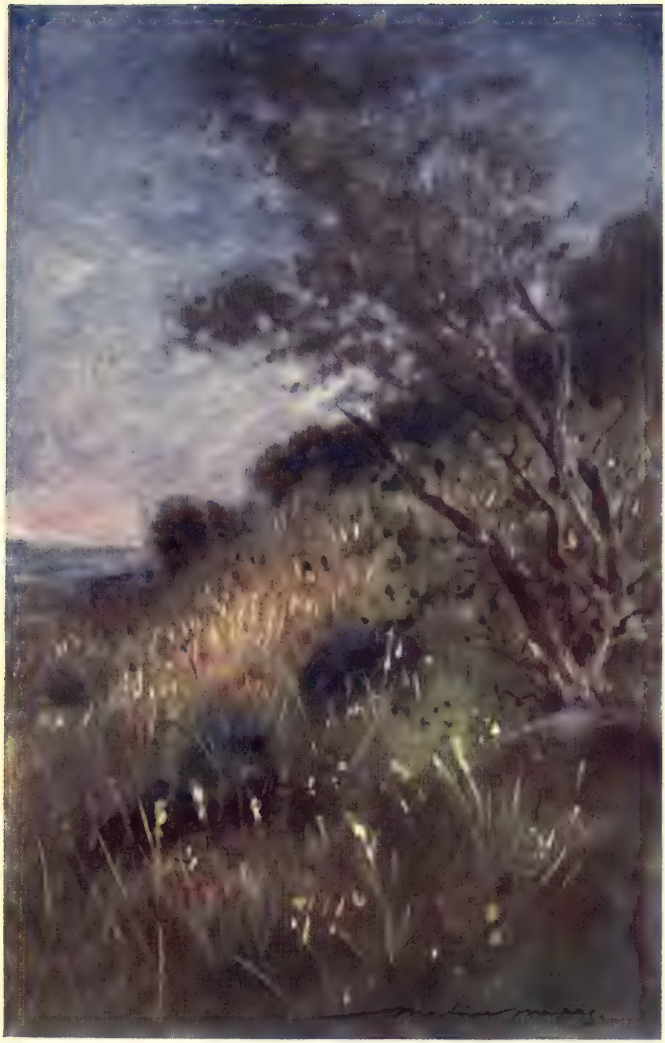
I remember once standing on the stoep of the Club and watching a group of correspondents talking very excitedly together. The centre of the group was one of the best-known war artists—a man who had lately drifted in from Ladysmith, and was evidently looked upon as rather a wag, for they were all laughing noisily. As I was watching them, a Colonel, a friend of mine, rode up to talk to me, and dismounted just in front of them. Instantly the war artist stepped forward, winking impertinently to his

companions, and touched his hat as he said, "Hold your horse, sir?" The Colonel, without a glance or a word, threw his reins with great dexterity over the man's arm, and, remarking that he had something to say to me, strolled into the Club. We heard peals of derisive laughter from the men, and, looking out of the window, saw the wretched war artist, with a sickly grin on his face, still holding the horse. When we came out, after an hour, there he was still, determined to go through with it. As the Colonel mounted, by way of being extremely witty, he put out his hand for a tip. The Colonel, very deliberately and without a word, placed threepence in the palm of his hand and rode off. The expression on that man's face was pitiful to see. I felt sorry for him as he turned on his heel and walked away still holding the threepence, thoroughly crushed, followed by the laughter of his friends. He was never known after that day to tell a funny story at the front. The last time I saw him he was walking round and round his own Cape cart trying to find it, although with poor success, for, as a practical joke, it had been painted from khaki to apple-green. In justice to this artist, I might allude to the fact that he has weathered many campaigns, and that whenever he appears at home upon the lecture platform, upon his breast a row of medals sparkle — silent witnesses to that unfailing courage and tenacity of purpose of which he has sent home so many illustrations to his own particular journal.

There were many men in South Africa who were

not correspondents at all, men who had no right on the field ; and it was the arduous task of the Press Censor to weed them out. Lord Stanley at first was very lenient—too lenient, I think—and he often talked to me of his difficulties with the correspondents. It is perfectly possible, in the present troubled state of the political world, that we are in for a series of campaigns, and the question of the newspaper correspondents is so serious that it must be dealt with in a determined manner. Great as was the scandal of having unnecessary ladies at the front, the ridiculous number of wholly unnecessary, and in many cases not in the least legitimate, correspondents at the front was an even greater scandal. In any future campaign those who are responsible for its conduct should draw up rules of a vigorous description for the control of the correspondents. The number of correspondents should be greatly diminished. In fact, one to each journal with each column would be sufficient. When I first came in touch with Lord Stanley, he inquired how many men were with Lord Roberts's column representing *Black and White*. I said that I did not know ; but on inquiring I found that there were fourteen or fifteen, the bulk of whom were absolutely unauthorised, or, rather, had merely brought typewritten letters to state that they were correspondents. At last the *Black and White* question became so complicated and so difficult that Lord Stanley was forced to say, "I will allow two men with Lord Roberts's column only" ; and he gave me the chance of choosing them, which I found very diffi-

NEAR LADYSMITH



cult. Then, there was another great difficulty. Men came and went from Bloemfontein, sent drawings and letters, just as they pleased, without asking the Censor's permission. This was not right: I myself never thought of leaving Bloemfontein without Lord Stanley's permission, or of sending a drawing away without first showing to him a thumb-nail sketch of it. This neglect on the part of the correspondents Lord Stanley felt very deeply, and he was forced to draw up a code of rules, which he showed to me before they were printed; I thought them very just. So much unnecessary abuse has been heaped upon the head of Lord Stanley and the censors generally, and they have come in for so much blame for the manner in which they have executed their difficult and arduous task, that I feel it a duty to say what I have said; and, so far as I know, no one has ever yet come forward with a view of the correspondents' side of the question. Far be it from me to appear to step forward as their champion. They need none. I only want to state my own particular experience of the censors,—and I have met many of them. They did their work admirably. I would especially wish to mention Lord Stanley, Major Bagot, and Major O'Meara.

No one knows the difficulty a press censor has with the men who use the name of correspondent simply to get to the front and make money out of the soldiers. No trick is too mean for them to stoop to. My experience of such men has been wide and varied. I remember when I and a fellow-correspondent were starting on our

career to the front. We had reached Orange River knowing nothing of campaigning, and were in great difficulties about getting a Cape cart and horses. We suddenly spotted a correspondent of one of our important illustrated papers, and, as he had already been to the front and was more or less settled down, we flew to him for advice. "I'll do anything you like for you," he said, very generously. "Can I take your photographs? I'll turn them out very neatly and very cheaply." We were disgusted, and told him that he most certainly could not: we were only poor correspondents, not clients, and had come to him for information. "O!" he said, "I see—information?" and his expression changed, falling several degrees lower. "Well, your horses will cost you from £20 to £30 apiece," he said, casually. We said that we thought that was surely very expensive. "O!" he said, "your paper will pay for that—don't you worry! You can be as expensive as you like." From that moment I determined to be doubly economical, just because of my paper. "Do you know," he continued, "they have no idea at home of the amount we correspondents are spending!" and I felt quite sure that they had not. "I have turned my cart into a dark room, and I am doing a roaring business!" So he was. I learnt afterwards that he was making £100 a week by photographing officers and men. No wonder men found it difficult to get to the front as correspondents when such people as these were making a business of it. Here was a man —a photographer driving a roaring trade—sending

work to his paper doubtless ; but that was only a minor consideration.

We met at Orange River a Swede who had once been a foreign attaché, and, on becoming tired of that, had developed into a correspondent as an excuse to get to the front. From Cape Town to Bloemfontein I travelled with a man of much the same calibre, but the cleverest fraud I ever came across. He was travelling to the front as a representative of an American paper ; but before the journey was over he told me that, of course, he was no such person. He was travelling with another correspondent whom he called his servant, and who was paying £30 to be smuggled to Bloemfontein by him. He represented no paper whatever ; but through sheer American cheek and perseverance he had tricked the censor at Cape Town into giving him a provisional pass, which, by making himself useful to Lord Stanley, carrying a letter for him, he had soon converted into a permanent one. He went back to Cape Town, and found that there was the chance of occupying a position as correspondent on the side of the enemy, which he did not hesitate to fill. Here was a man holding two licenses in his pocket—one Boer, the other British ;—and he is not an uncommon instance of the type of men whom Lord Stanley had to deal with. But so thoroughly did he take things in hand eventually, and so vigorously did he set to work, that there was soon quite a procession of correspondents travelling from Bloemfontein to the base, having been fired from the front. There were shoals of them, and they all told

me that they were going to Cape Town for a rest; but I noticed that they never returned—they must have been very tired, I fancy. The longer I acted as a correspondent at the front, the more I realised the necessity for a distinctive uniform to be worn by us. There should be a coloured gorget—something to distinguish the correspondent from the ordinary soldier. It was as embarrassing to be taken for a Tommy as to be mistaken by the Tommies for a general,—to create all sorts of unnecessary disturbances,—for groups of poor Tommies to drop their luncheon and spring to attention —to have the guard come out to salute at sight of your helmet. All this was wrong, and I felt bashful and alarmed at the amount of attention I (or, rather, my helmet) received. And it occurred to me that a correspondent should occupy some position in the army, and that, like the members of the surgical and veterinary branches, he should have his own little niche.

At Bloemfontein the correspondents edited a paper, and this was the first time that a paper had been edited on the field of battle. After a time they became quite ambitious, and began to publish illustrated interviews with famous persons. On the issuing of the first of this series of interviews, the subject — a member of Parliament — was furious, because (he declared) the portrait was not the least bit like him. He made a tremendous fuss, and threatened to punish the editors. Not only, he said, were the features totally unlike his own, but also the hair—always a tender point with him—was not dressed in the fashion of his locks. This hurt



LIEUT.-GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD OUTSIDE BLOEMFONTEIN



him deeply, and the whole town knew of the great wrong that had been done to him. Next day, however, there was an interview with General Pole-Carew, and—lo and behold!—the same portrait. Generals Roberts, Buller, French, and many others, appeared in due course of time, and the same portrait did duty for each. The editors, when questioned as to the curious similarity of their artist's sketches, were bound to admit that, as their apparatus was very primitive indeed, and they had no means of reproducing the pen drawings that were sent in, they were forced to fall back on an ancient block that they had found—an advertisement for a well-known hair-restorer—as a substitute. Curiously enough, very few men thought of collecting the numbers of this interesting paper. I was one of the many who did not realise its value. If it had not been for Mr. Julian Ralph, who was kind enough to give myself and Mr. Rudyard Kipling a set, I should have missed that valuable collection, which is now, I am told, worth £30.

The correspondents were not bitten with the stamp craze; but that was the only thing they did miss. They were so much occupied with their bursting shells and imaginary battles that they missed the one tangible thing of the campaign—namely, the postage stamp surcharged V.R.I. in all its variations of missing dots.

A few out of the great mass of correspondents I knew intimately, and some were splendid fellows. My first meeting with Mr. Bennet Burleigh was on the top of a kopje, when he handed me his card in the middle of

a battle. He was the first correspondent I had met in South Africa, and he impressed me much. Mr. Burleigh suggests his name—a big, strong, keen fellow with a powerful voice, a man who looks in perfect health. He was the first to educate me in relation to battles. He seemed to have great habits, and to know everybody. He never hesitated to look through Lord Roberts's telescope or to share a camp-stool with General Pole-Carew. Then, there was Mr. Julian Ralph, a delightful man, one of the few correspondents who talked charitably of his fellow-workers, and was not bitten with the mania for ignoring them,—a man with an intensely sympathetic voice, and amazingly popular: an artist in the true sense of the word.

Mr. Gwynne, Reuter's correspondent, was one of the cleverest journalists we had out there. He understood the business, and from the moment I met him I felt I had met a master. He knew how to handle horses, how to outspan; he did not go round corners and whisper stories that were too good copy to be spoken out loud. He told you frankly and clearly all he knew, and was just a straightforward gentleman: a man who understood war as a soldier would, and talked as such. His was a face indicating a strong character. Mr. Battersby I had sympathy with almost immediately I met him, which was at Kimberley; afterwards I met him at Bloemfontein, and more or less all through the march. He struck me as being one of the few correspondents who would be really capable of writing a history of the war. Lord Rosslyn, though I knew



WINSTON CHURCHILL AS WAR CORRESPONDENT



him well at home, I never had the privilege of meeting on the veldt. Mr. Frederick Villiers, of course, every one knows: he has fought many battles on the platforms of our English lecture halls. It is unnecessary to describe Mr. Villiers's appearance on the veldt. It is precisely the same as it is upon the platform. He gave me some very useful hints as to the correct food to take with one when camping out: first, when thirsty you must only wet the mouth, and not drink; second, you must always carry with you a certain tinned meat which is invaluable. He is the essence of good nature, and wherever he goes every one says, "Ah! here is dear old Villiers." He is amazingly popular, and (to do him justice) he is less daring and reckless upon the field than he appears upon the platform.

CHAPTER XI

MEDICINE IN THE FIELD

It is a source of wonderment that there have been so many attacks made upon the hospital system in South Africa. Considering the almost incredible difficulties of time and space with which the staff had to contend, one can only say that the medical work carried on at the front afforded a marvellous instance of British pluck, perseverance, and capacity. No class of men had to encounter greater difficulties during the campaign than the officers of the Army Medical Corps and the Army Service Corps; yet none achieved so great a success as these, the real heroes of the war. In the hospitals at Bloemfontein, at Kimberley, and at the various camps on the march from Klip Drift, the devotion of doctors and nurses, their unceasing and arduous work, and the wonderfully capable manner in which it was persistently carried out, were simply superb. It was work that could hardly have been surpassed in the wards of St. Bartholomew's or St. George's.

Of one hospital in particular I made a careful study. That was Langman's in Bloemfontein. Hitherto I had



DR. CONAN DOYLE


Mortimer Menpes

rather shunned hospitals, as being inartistic and unnecessary for my work; but I was induced to pay a visit to this hospital—in the first place in order to make a sketch of Dr. Conan Doyle, its superintendent; in the second place from a real desire to see what was going on. I found Dr. Doyle with his sleeves tucked up working like a nigger. It was difficult to associate him with the author of *Sherlock Holmes:* he was a doctor pure and simple, an enthusiastic doctor too. "You'll make yourself ill," I said, as he came up to me: "you're overworking yourself." "Yes: I am overworked," said he. "We are all overworked just now. We have such a tremendous incursion of patients that it is almost impossible to cope with them, and we are bound to work night and day. Sometimes I have to drag myself up to the top of a kopje in order to stir up a little energy to go on with my work." But Dr. Doyle did not seem to lack energy. I never saw a man throw himself into duty so thoroughly heart-and-soul. "And are you writing a book of your experiences out here as a doctor?" I asked. "How can I? What time have I to think of it? You have no idea what a tremendous amount of work we have to do! In the midst of all this agony I couldn't settle to literary work. For instance, look at this inferno!" As he spoke he threw open the door of one of the principal wards, and what I saw baffles description. The only thing I can liken it to is a slaughter-house. I have seen dreadful sights in my life; but I have never seen anything quite to equal this—the place was saturated with enteric fever,

and patients were swarming in at such a rate that it was impossible to attend to them all. Some of the cases were too terrible for words. And here in the midst of all these horrors you would see two or three black-robed Sisters of Mercy going about silently and swiftly, doing work that would make a strong man faint, handling the soldiers as though they were infants, bandaging and dressing and attending to a thousand little details, all in a calm unruffled way, never appearing in a hurry. "What superb women!" I exclaimed involuntarily. Dr. Doyle smiled as he watched them. "They are angels," he said simply. And I imagined Mr. Burdett Coutts, M.P., glancing superficially in at this ward, and having perhaps to rush back to Cape Town on his way to England carrying with him an impression that would be hopelessly wrong. For there are moments in a hospital when the wounded pour in at such a rate that the wards are filled to overflowing —when the few doctors and nurses have to work, not as human beings, but as fiends. I visited Langman's hospital nearly every day during my stay in Bloemfontein, and I always found it the same, always in perfect order, doctors and nurses working untiringly from morning until night; and every day I went away marvelling. It fascinated me to watch these gentlewomen flitting noiselessly about the well-regulated wards, or, still more, to watch them dexterously setting to rights some terrible confusion caused by an unexpected influx of patients, want of space, and the scarcity of nurses—to watch their cheery doctor carry-



BURDETT COUTTS, M.P.



ing sunshine with him wherever he went, worshipped by all. It is to these brave souls and their leaders that the highest praise is due ; it is they who have done the noblest work of the whole campaign.

I disagree with Mr. Burdett Coutts right along the line. I had many opportunities of studying the doctors and nurses in South Africa. If there is any fault to be found at all, it is not in their medical capacity. It lies in quite another direction ; and that is that the doctors were all born collectors, stamp fiends. They couldn't help it. It seemed to be part of themselves ; it was in their very marrow ; they took to collecting as a duck takes to water, naturally. I first learnt the value of a double-shaft Kruger coin from a doctor ; when I started to collect postage stamps it was a doctor I first saw waiting outside for the door of the General Post Office to open on the morning when the V.R.I. stamps were to be issued. If a man had an interesting collection of stamps, a doctor was always on the spot to give him medical attendance. This was the one fault. They may have occupied too much time and space in searching for Dutch Bibles on the battlefield and filling whole Cape carts with their photographic apparatus at a time when every square inch of room was of value—nothing more.

Doctors are the most entertaining fellows in the world ; and when I was outspanning, or resting for a time on the march, my first thoughts were to search for a doctor, whether it was for information when in difficulty, to be entertained by his humorous stories

and unfailing good nature, or to see his collection of trophies. And a doctor's tent was always worth a visit. It generally resembled a museum, filled, as it was, with bottled reptiles, bloodstained pocket-books, photographs of Boer women, postage stamps, proclamations, and what not. One man showed me a pocket-book which he was very proud of because a bullet had passed through it before lodging in a poor fellow's chest. Once start a doctor on the theme of bullets, and there was no end to the stories he would tell. One doctor declared that he had attended a Tommy who had tattooed on his chest a perfect little landscape through a bullet having struck an indelible pencil in his breast pocket. Then he enlarged upon the beauty of the landscape—the exquisite drawing of the trees, which, he declared, no Jap, however skilful, could have executed; everything was true in tone, the sky in proper relation to the foreground, and the whole framing itself into a perfect square.

But the effects of bullets were sometimes very terrible. I saw less of wounds and horrors than most men at the front. I shut my eyes to such things. The ugly side of the war did not appeal to me as an artist. I was not looking for that side, but only for the picturesque and the beautiful. Now and again, however, the ugly side was thrust upon one. There were times when it was impossible to ignore it, and some of the most awful sights I have ever seen in my life have been my experience of expanding and explosive bullets. One poor fellow whom I saw had been struck in the arm with that most



RED CROSS WAGGONS



cruel of missiles, the expanding bullet. I mention this because it was the most remarkable instance of grit that I have ever known. The wound on one side of the arm, where the bullet had entered, was round and clean-cut, just large enough to allow for the thickness of a slate pencil ; but on the other side, where the bullet had expanded, the bone was splintered and half of the arm blown off. The patient was an Afrikander and the pluckiest man I ever saw. He bore the excruciating pain without a groan, and, although he fainted twice in my presence while the doctor was dressing his wound, he refused to touch spirit, because he was, he said, a teetotaller. In vain they tried to explain that the pain would be so much easier to bear if he would take just a spoonful : he shook his head and bore it to the end. That is what I call true courage.

Besides their capacity for telling humorous stories, photographing, and collecting interesting mementos, the doctors were the very best looters. None could touch them. Every one of them seemed to know by instinct the best way to loot a farm, a waggon, a horse, a mule ; and he was always on the spot. The " Rimingtons " may have visited a farmhouse and apparently swept it of everything ; but let a doctor loose an hour afterwards on the same place, and see if he did not come out of the back door with a lapful of things that they had overlooked ! I travelled from Kimberley to Klip Drift with a man who might well be called the King of Looters. He was a local man attached to the army, and had undertaken to give me my first lesson in

campaigning. He was a glorious robber, a genius; and before we were many miles from Kimberley my education began in earnest. Every farm, every cottage, the whole country, was swept bare as though a plague of locusts had passed over it. Bottles, Dutch Bibles, and even private letters, he pilfered; and by the time we got to Klip Drift his cart looked for all the world like a Christmas tree, hung over as it was with pots, pans, bottles, chairs, wax fruit, and eight tripods. These tripods were a speciality with the doctor. "They were so useful," he said; but I thought he had too many, and sent my man Robert to pick one off the cart, and I must confess that he did choose the best. But, with all his loot, the doctor was not satisfied. He could never be happy until he had brought back a good riding horse. Hour after hour he spent in fruitless search. At the critical moment his prey always escaped him, and, although scheme after scheme ended in failure, I could not but admire the dexterous way in which he set about it. Suddenly he said, "Hullo! Just look at that bay mare over there with the white foot. Isn't she a beauty?" I strained my eyes, and could only see a faint blob which might have been an ox or a mule; but the doctor, with his great habits and keen eyesight, knew exactly, and was off like a streak with the Kaffir boy. They began the same performance again, circling round and round, endeavouring to wedge the horses in between the kopjes; and as they drew nearer I could see that the mare was indeed a beauty, and answered exactly to the doctor's description. With a little foal,

BOER WAGGON COMMANDEERED AND USED BY RED CROSS

she was in the middle of a group of horses. They came nearer and nearer, and the doctor's plan seemed very like succeeding when I saw him suddenly dismount, wave back the Kaffir boy, creep slowly up to about fifty yards of the horses, and fire two shots at the foal. Naturally there was a stampede, and they all galloped off, the foal included. "What on earth did you do that for?" I asked. "I suppose you were demoralised and wanted to get rid of them." "O no: not demoralised. Didn't you understand? I shot the foal intending to kill it. Then the mother would have hung round, and I should have caught her. Remember that dodge. You may have to do it yourself." I determined that I should do nothing of the kind, and it did occur to me that it was just a little cruel.

This was my first experience of the doctor; and when we got back to camp with our Christmas tree, I found that he had quite a reputation there as a looter. From the General down they all said, "O dear, yes: we know him!" I had never seen this man doctoring: I did not know him from that standpoint until, one moonlight night, I saw him with many others at work on the field of battle. It was a ghastly scene. I had no idea anything could be so terrible. Some were dead, some dying; and to see the swift way these doctors attended to them! Were there ever such men? What did it matter if they were looters, photographers, collectors, so long as they showed themselves to be as they were that night—the finest, noblest, most courageous set of men in the world!

It is impossible to over-estimate the pluck and courage of the doctor at the front. The Army Medical Corps does not get much applause; but it is certain that since this war in South Africa it will occupy a far higher position in the army than it has ever done before. The soldiers, who hitherto have been rather inclined to sneer at the doctors, now cannot say enough in their favour.

Not so the veterinary branch. I have heard innumerable complaints against that department by officers and men alike, and some have been very bitter. They all said that the local knowledge was not being properly used. Through sheer jealousy, the local veterinary surgeon, who naturally understood the conditions at the front far better than any one else, was totally ignored, and incompetent strangers were chosen in his place. In a railway carriage at the front I met two Majors who were bubbling over with grievances on this score, and, although I tried to look as uncommunicative as I could, they would persist in pouring into my ears their tale of woe. One began, "The local talent is not used, sir: I tell you it's not used!" "Really?" I assented, sleepily. "I know a man at Cape Town," he continued, "a brilliant expert, who was refused—actually refused—to be allowed to go to the front. And what is he doing now? Pottering about doing clerical work, kept there through jealousy, when goodness knows the value he would be here! And then they are so narrow. Think of this! My horse was ill at Modder River; linseed oil was recom-

mended by a local vet. as the only remedy; I wired for permission to headquarters; the message came, 'Linseed oil not to be administered.' And that by a man hundreds of miles away, who knew nothing of the horse or its malady! Pshaw!—it's so narrow!" "Narrow!" broke in his companion, who had been tapping impatiently on the window, burning to tell his own narrative. "It's not the word! I had a horse, a very valuable creature, and saved its life by giving it three bottles and a half of whisky. The authorities refused to pay the debt. In the end I had to pay for the four bottles—I don't know where the other half went—and the Government gained one valuable horse." This, I felt bound to admit, was trying.

No: whoever else was a success on the field, most emphatically the English veterinary surgeon was not. But the ordinary doctor, the army medical officer, stands upon a very different footing. It is impossible to speak too highly of him. In every sense of the word, he was the right man in the right place: whoever has failed in this great campaign, it certainly is not the doctor.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION IN THE FIELD

RELIGION seems rather a quaint subject for an artist to take up; but I suppose parsons are human beings like the rest of us, and I don't think that as human beings they "panned out" particularly well. In speaking of the Church, I am speaking of it from the standpoint of the ordinary outsider, who has seen and studied the clergyman on the field under every possible condition, and therefore it is as the ordinary outsider that I feel perfectly justified in expressing my views concerning them. It appeared to me that never in this world had such an opportunity presented itself for the right man as during this war in South Africa. Unfortunately, the right man was not there; opportunity after opportunity passed neglected. Take, for example, a great battle, whether it resulted in reverse or in victory. Many men have been lost; all have passed through a great excitement; all are humbled, softened, more or less susceptible to spiritual influence. Then is the time for a great preacher to arise and with his "magnetic personality" and simple lessons to soothe and win over

to his cause that earnest saddened audience of soldiers, to find an echo in thousands of hearts that will reverberate to the end of their lives. It was a cause of real regret, to officers and men and correspondents alike, that not one single chaplain in the field seemed to realise on these subtle occasions the splendid opportunities that were presented for doing good. People have often said to me, when talking of these clergymen, "But surely they were good men?" Of course they were good, as good as they were dull; but they were not good preachers, and, after all, to an outsider this is rather an important thing. All that I complain of is that they were men of no magnetism, no strong personality, and without the least capacity to impress themselves and their doctrines upon the people by whom they were surrounded. They were men, doubtless, of spotless lives, but of equally spotless emptiness, mere empty goodness; and is there anything more futile in this wide world? I maintain that this was wrong. The very best men of the day should have been chosen for this the most striking religious work of the nineteenth century. There are dozens of these men in London—fancy Dean Farrar, or the present Bishop of Durham—think of the good they could have done in South Africa! It seemed to me that there had not been sufficient pains taken to pick out exactly the right kind of man for this very special work. Some of the best men and some of the most charming I have known have been clergymen; but they have also been human beings, living, palpitating human

beings, full of worldly knowledge and magnetic manliness. And these are the qualities that are needed in a chaplain in time of war. It seems to me that, just as the best Generals, the best doctors, and the best nurses were sent to the front, so should the very best clergymen that the Church possesses have been despatched.

During my stay in South Africa I had the opportunity of studying many different types. There was the little clergyman who always got up and gave the same dull uninteresting sermon, with rather an uneducated accent, and was sneered at accordingly. Then, there was the timid, nervous minister who would go up to a crowd of Tommies on the veldt just at their busiest moment and of course be cold-shouldered by them—they knew what was coming and resented being interfered with. Again, there was his opposite—the popular clergyman, popular because he laid down his work and talked to the soldiers as to equals; yet he too was worthless, for we want the type of man who takes his work with him wherever he goes, and has the strength never to deny it—who wins his way and is loved because of his work,—but such a man was not sent out to South Africa, for I neither met him with Lord Roberts's column nor did I ever hear of his being anywhere else. Another type, in my opinion the worst of all, because it was the weakest, was the man who makes no impression upon his fellowmen at all—nothing more than a flickering spirit passing on his way unloved and unregarded through great masses of human lives. Happily, this species of clergy-



ON THE WAY TO LADYSMITH



man is rare. Nor were the Anglican clergy only amiss. The Nonconformist ministers appeared as a rule to be just as incapable and as inadequate. Only the Roman clergy won universal applause, as indeed they do in every part of the world.

Let me relate what I once saw of a little minister at the front. He was a feeble little man, and interested me because he never did anything but sit on his food. Although I was brought in constant touch with him day after day—I saw him in the morning, I saw him in the afternoon, I saw him at night —I always saw him within fifty yards of a waggon to which he was more or less attached, either sitting by the side of it on a biscuit tin, or, inside, perched on the top of a pile of Maconochie rations. There seemed no excuse for this little person being at the front at all. He rode in state on the food waggon while every one else walked. He slept under shelter when the officers had no more than a blanket. He never by any chance talked to the soldiers. He was unrespected, sneered at, pitied, by all. In fact, he was so much unnecessary baggage occupying precious space. The only excuse we could find for him was that he served as a landmark, a timepiece,—what you will. Whenever we saw him roll himself up and slip off the cart like a seal, and begin pottering about with a tripod, we knew it was time for a meal, as he was considered an authority on such matters. This little thing interested me. In the midst of the labour and strain of that historical march on Bloemfontein it fascinated me to watch the career of

this feeble solitary little person—to watch him slide off the waggon four times a day, cook his coffee, and clamber back to his seat on the Maconochie once more. I tried to think that he was training for some special work, or that he was seeing life; and he grew to be such a familiar figure that one day I boldly asked him why he was there—whether it was an idea of his own or curiosity that had led him to the front. "Do you like the life here?" I asked him. "No," he said: "O no." "Well, why do you sit here?" "O, well, they say that sometimes it is difficult to find your way on the veldt, and I never stray far from the waggon because I am attached to the Quartermaster-Sergeant and he looks after my rations." "Have you seen much? Are you interested much?" I asked. "No: not much, not interested much." It exasperated me to think of this flabby person too much occupied with sitting on his food and eating to have time to look about him, and see the myriads of missed opportunities for doing good that there were gathered round his little cart. If he had stood up on one of his Maconochie tins and talked to the few Tommies in his immediate vicinity, even in the most meagre language, he would have done some good. Tommy is a splendid fellow, with a great respect for his religious teachers; but this little gentleman did not even try to convert me, although, I am sure, he had every chance of doing so.

There was another type of minister I was continually meeting, who reminded me in many respects of the

correspondents. He was fond of advertisement. His one craze was to be noticed—to be sketched or to be written about. If he talked to you it was always in connection with himself. In common with the correspondents, he was always running grave and foolhardy risks. There was one story of his that always wrought up the audience to a high pitch of excitement; it affected myself considerably. He described a great battle. The atmosphere was charged with bullets when he, at the critical moment, ran straight into the chaplain on the side of the enemy. He invariably finished by saying, "And think of us two God-fearing men fighting face to face all through the campaign and neither of us knowing it!" I think this was the narrowest-minded man I have ever met. He was a Nonconformist. I remember seeing him on one occasion sitting on a rock just outside Bloemfontein mending the knees of his trousers. He was doing it in a public way, as if to point out to all the world that he—a minister—wore out his clothes in an unusual place—the knee. As I passed I called out to him, "Hullo! that seems suggestive!" He seemed pleased, and called back, "Yes: that's where I wear 'em out."

Of course, there was always the economical type of minister. I travelled in a train once with a gentleman who gave us the impression of being amazingly economical. He was a parson, and was carrying with him a large clothes-basket of fruit given to him as a present to distribute among the soldiers at

the front. He occupied a whole compartment to himself—ministers generally have that privilege, I notice ;—and he suggested to us one day that it would be rather a good plan for us all to share any food we had and eat together. We agreed, and the first meal turned out an utter failure. Religion produced two apples and one bunch of grapes ; while we had to supply the meat, bread, butter, and wine—all food brought from Cape Town, which was considered a great luxury. The minister, as we found to our cost, was an enormous eater · in fact, he ate as much as the rest of us put together. Just as we were half through our meal the train drew up at a station where I bought sixpennyworth of Muscatel grapes and placed them in the middle of the table. The minister immediately pounced upon them and ate quite half. I never saw a man gorge as he did. At the end of the meal, while we were laughing and talking, he carefully picked up the bunch of grapes and the two apples, placed them cosily in a bag, and without a word drifted into his own compartment. He came gaily in again in the evening, with his apples and his bunch of grapes, and declared very joyously that he had come to dine ; but we were not feeling hungry, and thought that we could dispense with the presence of this good gentleman at any future meal.

There is a type of clergyman whom, whilst you admire him as a man, you do not think of associating with the Church. That is the sporting clergyman He is much more popular than the other clergy,

LADYSMITH



because he lays down his work and is just a good fellow. He can sing a comic song; he can tell stories; he can even dance a skirt dance on emergency; and he is the life and soul of any party he goes to. All this because he does not preach—because he is not what they call a "damper." If he goes up to a group of men who are telling funny stories, his presence has not the effect of cleansing the atmosphere or checking the mirth, but rather of making things a shade funnier.

During all the months that I spent in South Africa I only met one clergyman who made me stop to reflect for one moment. We were all just in the condition to receive good impressions at that time. Whether it was the influence of the veldt or of the terrible scenes that went on around us, I know not; but every man among us was softened and at his best. One felt to a certain extent that the animal side had been crushed. If there ever was a hope of kindling the spiritual side of our natures, that was the moment. The way Tommy talked of his home, the way he talked of his pals, talked of his wife, was all clean and fresh; Tommy was a better man than he is in London, and might have been taught many lessons which he would probably never have forgotten. But I am bound to say that the chaplains at the front, whether they were Anglicans or Nonconformists, appeared to me to exercise but little influence over the men among whom they were supposed to minister.

It is, however, a pleasure to recall the name of the

Rev. Mr. Faulkner, Anglican chaplain to the Brigade of Guards. He marched on foot side by side with his congregation through the whole campaign, sharing their hardships, tending the sick, soothing the wounded, one heart and soul with his men, cheering, encouraging, uplifting all with whom he came into contact. A man whom every one loved and respected, a credit to his cloth in every sense of the word.

One of the things that amazed me most in South Africa—of which I shall speak in another chapter, when I go fully into the subject—was the deep religious feelings of the enemy, and the simultaneous singing of hymns by the different commandoes. Religion is to them a habit of life, a daily influence; and I could not help thinking of the difference between these psalm-singing Boers and our own men. I never heard an English Tommy singing a hymn either by himself or in the company of others. I never heard any reference to religious matters among the officers or among the men. I can't say that I particularly expected it; yet when actually on the field one seemed specially to notice its glaring absence among the English troops. Curiously enough, I would hear a Presbyterian Scotsman bemoaning that he had to fight against a people who were "so God-fearing" as the Boers, or a General remarking that he wished to goodness he had this psalm-singing element among his own men, and declaring that with that additional force they would be invincible; but I never heard either a private or an officer talk of a single sermon he had heard during the war. They

all flocked to hear Miss Fraser sing. She filled the church with soldiers. If there had been a Mr. Fraser to preach such sermons—a Dean Farrar with a strong magnetic personality who could get up and hypnotise a crowd! Such is the type of chaplains we want attached to the army—men magnetic as well as brave, men chosen because of their brilliancy as well as for their goodness—just, in short, the dying man speaking to dying men, whom one would wish to meet in the stress and agony of the battle-field, but whom unfortunately, so far as my own experience goes, one never does by any chance encounter at such a time and in such a place.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAR AND PHILATELY

DURING this campaign there was an extraordinary craze which has never before occurred in any other war in the world, but may possibly play a very considerable part in the wars of the future ; and that is the craze for postage stamps. Every one in South Africa was more or less demoralised by this fascinating mania—soldiers, doctors, nurses, clergymen—few were exempt from it. For a time the army had contented itself with collecting such trifles as shells, coins, and Bibles ; soldiers worked themselves into fevers over the double-shaft Kruger sovereign ; civilians, forgetting their natural fear, strayed recklessly about on the battle-field searching for bullets and fragments of shell ; in short, every man in the army was converted into a rabid collector ; and the fever only increased as the days wore on, until by the time we arrived at Bloemfontein the army was ripe to throw all its energies into the new craze that was soon to present itself—namely, the surcharging of the Orange Free State stamps V.R.I. in black. How strange it seems that so small a matter as a general taste for



BLOEMFONTEIN—EVENING



collecting postage stamps should (as it were) elevate a man at a single bound into a position where his slightest act in detecting the difference of shade between two bits of paper of the same colour will sway the destinies of a horde of fanatical collectors!

That a man should occupy so exalted a position was accidentally brought to my notice after a return to Bloemfontein from a run to the Cape, where I found the market square, the club, the hotels, and the street corners, grouped with people who appeared to be intensely interested in the discussion of some all-important subject. Thinking that some radical proclamation had been issued, I paused to listen ; but, instead of legal phrase and technical term greeting my ear, the only intelligent word that I could detect in the buzz which emanated from the centre of the group was, "Dot." "Dot, dot, dot," appeared to be the burden of every one's conversation. At the corners of the streets there were groups of men discussing "dots" ; boys in the gutter were scrabbing one another over "dots" ; everywhere I went the same "dot" arrested my attention, until I began to think that the whole of the British army and the entire civil and commercial population of Bloemfontein had in a literal sense of the word gone dotty. At last, feeble and bewildered, I wandered helplessly about on the verge of an incurable dottiness myself. Finally, I pulled myself together, and, blind to all dangers, plunged into a group of "dotters," grasped one of them by the arm, and, in answer to my appeals, heard him hiss, as he roughly shook me off, "Surcharged

stamps, you fool—misprinted without dots!" Then I understood! My curiosity was stimulated, and I soon learnt the subtle differences which add to or subtract from the value of the surcharged Free State stamps. It was simply this: a "dot" between one of the surcharged letters had, by printer's error, dropped out. But if, by chance, a letter itself was missing the stamp went up a hundred-fold. Owing to the primitive appliances for the printing of these stamps, dotless stamps were fairly frequent occurrences. Not so, however, with a dropped letter. That is detected immediately; happy the collector, and envied of his fellows, who is fortunate enough to secure one of these. Finally, I became the proud possessor of a dotless stamp. That settled it. I became hopelessly dotty immediately; and to the end of my natural days I shall always realise that affairs of state, literature, money, and even art, are secondary to the importance of obtaining "the entire set," especially if they are from the "bottom row" and "dotless."

In my inquiries during the first stage of the disease I found that Major O'Meara was the supreme authority on the subject, and I went to him for information. I had heard, also, that the National Bank were to be allowed the privilege of having the stock of stamps surcharged, and I begged permission from the Major to accompany him when he went to censor them. Two days after, we went together and spent a whole morning censoring these stamps. O, the subtle delicacy of this work! Here was a man suddenly put into a position where he had to cope with the very sharpest and keenest



EVENING



men in the world. Picture-dealers, publishers, butchers, book-makers, journalists—all of whom are supposed to be the craftiest of men—could not have been compared with these Bloemfontein stamp-dealers—men who would stop at nothing, however knavish, to gain their ends. But the Major was quite equal to the occasion, and by a series of brilliant coups outwitted them all. He first recommended the officials to sell their stamps unsurcharged to collectors, who pay them more than the face value; but their answer was prompt and indignant. "We are bankers, sir, not dealers." "Very well," exclaimed the Major, with a shrug, as he passed into a small ante-room where this huge collection of stamps was waiting to be censored after the surcharge. For three hours I watched him as, with wonderful skill and discrimination, he picked out bits of paper which were obsolete, and which an accidental surcharging had made of such untold value that, had they been allowed to circulate, the whole world of collectors would have been precipitated into a palpitating hysteria of speculation, until finally the stamps would have been catalogued and bought by some multi-millionaire bent upon ruining himself to appease a craze. That all the legally-surcharged stamps are carefully catalogued in the Major's busy brain will doubtless surprise a few rascally speculators who, possessing obsolete issues, have surreptitiously surcharged them in the hope of creating a rarity, to sell at fabulous prices. By the time the censoring was completed a delightful little packet of commandeered stamps lay by the Major's side—brown pennies, yellow shillings, pink

sixpennies—all stamps of priceless value, stamps the sight of which hypnotised me. "Now," said the Major, standing upright, 'I am going to take these stamps away to be destroyed." As he spoke a shiver ran through the room and a man with a liver-coloured face almost screamed, "Sir! These! You're not going to take these away surely! It would be unfair—unfair!" He was a collector, a dealer. I spotted him at once. He saw hundreds of pounds going away in that envelope; and I could feel for him in a remote way, as the Major coldly said, "But the face value of these stamps is very trifling: it can mean no more than a few pounds." He flicked the envelope contemptuously, knowing their value all the while. "Then, you see, these are not legitimate stamps at all, and would therefore have no value to you as bankers. You are not dealers: you must surely remember that little chat we had on this subject?" The man was cowed, and could say no more; but his face took on a still more livery hue, his fingers twitched convulsively, and the eyes, through sheer nervousness, turned perceptibly inwards. I thought he would have sprung on the envelope! "Please, may I have a sheet of pink sixpennies?" I said suddenly, for this seemed to be the moment for such a request. My tone was very mild; but if a thunderbolt had fallen among them, those young accountants could not have looked more petrified, as I laid down my money and trotted out at the Major's heels with the pink joys under my arm. "That's the man who did down the Bank," said these clerks of the National

Bank afterwards, when any one wanted to know who I was.

Leaving the Major's presence that day, I realised that the last stage of dotphobia had fastened itself upon me, and, knowing that recovery was impossible, I abandoned myself to its unrestrained indulgence, hoping at least to derive some miserable satisfaction before the end. There was one fearful stamp rogue in Bloemfontein. He was nominally a chemist; but no one ever went into his shop with the idea of buying anything save postage stamps. He was a robber of genius. One morning he became very confidential, and said suddenly, in a dramatic way, with one finger on his nose, "Now, supposing I could show you a brown penny, what would you say to that?" I had been working up to this for some time, and answered, "I should be amazed." He showed it to me, and I knew by his manner that he had more. I informed the Major of this, and by skilful handling the chemist was made to disgorge every one.

I was now quite an authority on stamps, and a rabid collector too. Nothing ever happened connected with stamps without my being on the spot. All my thoughts were of stamps, all my joys were connected with stamps; they were food and drink to me. To my great delight, I was allowed the privilege of a private view of the Orange Free State stamps before they were issued to the public; and suddenly, when looking over the half-penny and the penny values, I came across a missing "dot" after the "I." I begged the postmaster to let

me have some, and, although he pooh-poohed the idea of such paltry things ever being of any value, he kindly picked the faults out of the sheet and gave them to me. Now, I knew exactly what stamps to buy, and warned my friends to choose the twopence-halfpenny ones. This news spread like wildfire, and the stamp fever was at boiling-point. All the world lived at the Post Office now. Generals jostled sergeants, and privates hustled doctors, in their eagerness to buy up the twopence-halfpennies; but I noticed that in a rush for a missing "dot" the doctors invariably came out on top, while the clergy came in a very good second.

This mania had taken possession of the entire army. From Tommy to General the last biscuit or the last drink of whisky, or a pass to be out after 8 p.m., could be extracted, after a dozen refusals, by producing a dotless stamp. Mr. Kruger could have ended the war in an afternoon by simply sending out a dozen men, mounted on swift horses, wearing white coats with the entire set of Orange Free State stamps without "dots" pasted on the back. These scouts should have been sent forth unarmed, and should have ridden in close to our lines and then turned round showing their backs. The moment the army had caught sight of the set, they would have made a rush, and all the scouts would have had to do would be to ride fast enough, and in different directions, while by nightfall the Imperial troops would have been hopelessly lost on the boundless veldt. Mr. Kruger's scouts would have been perfectly safe. No one would have dared to point a rifle in their direction.

BLOEMFONTEIN CEMETERY—EVENING



A shot might have brought down a set ; but imagine, if you can, the fate of the miscreant if one dotless stamp should have been punctured, and if—horrible thought —a chance scattering of the lead should have dotted some of the precious bits of paper.

All the officers were bitten badly with the disease. I am afraid that some of them collected, not as philatelists, but as business men, and in order to make money. In fact, I have heard some very extraordinary stories of officers who have sent home strings of stamps that they could not have got legitimately from the Post Office, for when these particular stamps were issued we were only allowed to buy one shilling's worth at a time, and it was therefore impossible to procure whole sheets of (let us say) sixpennies.

When I came home with my stamps, some of which I was prepared to exchange in order to complete my collection of Transvaals, I naturally came in touch with the Strand dealers. I found that I had dropped straight into a new world — a world that was composed of thousands of collectors—men and women, all in deadly earnest and most of them making it their life's work. No sooner had I arrived in London than dozens and dozens of these people called on me to see my little collection, and they all told me exactly the same thing : "Sell at once. Don't hesitate for a moment, for we are now on the top of a boom, which will soon sink down to a dead level." I did not take their advice, but clung to my stamps—for several reasons. In the first place, I did not intend to sell ; in the second, my

experiences with dealers had been so varied and extraordinary that I could not believe that the advice was prompted by wholly unselfish motives. Often, while sitting in the little anterooms of these shops, I have heard officers selling strings and strings of stamps to the dealer, sometimes for very large sums. The atmosphere of these places is quaint. Every one is concerned with how they can best "do" the other. It is sordid, and different, somehow, from any other trade. The very language is strange. A dealer said to me once, "We had a lady in here this morning wanting to sell me a stamp for £100, and wasn't she a sharp 'un? She's made a good many hundred pounds already out of war stamps. Why, some of them are building country houses with the proceeds of these stamps!" I remember meeting at this dealer's an officer who had some interesting records in the way of letters from well-known Generals, and (to show what a collector the man was) he had with him 600 postage stamps, which the dealer was prepared to buy at thirty shillings a-piece. Any amount of money might have been made by laying oneself out to deal in stamps.

It was one of my chief amusements in Bloemfontein to lean against the wall of the Post Office and watch the motley collection of people buying their shillings' worths of stamps. Just as in a ballet you focus your eye upon one particular siren, so in this seething, fascinatingly interesting mass of people I would focus my eye upon one little man, and watch his antics closely. He was a Major, a portly fellow with a bland red face ;

and he occupied his morning with swinging in and out of the doors, until it made me quite dizzy to watch him. I never saw such energy. He seemed never to tire of swinging in, placing his money on the counter, and shouting, "Twelve penny stamps, please!" and then swinging out again, but only to reappear two seconds after, a shade more blown, at the door marked "In." This performance was kept up all day; but I noticed that as the time went on the swingings grew feebler and feebler, until at last they stopped entirely. After dinner at the Club I saw the old gentleman, worn-out but happy, sticking penny stamps on hundreds of letters, looking round occasionally with a satisfied beam at the men who had dropped their papers and were gazing at him in astonishment. "You seem to have a good stock of V.R.I. stamps," I remarked as I passed his desk. He stared at me for a moment as though in doubt, and, evidently concluding that I was safe, treated me to a long and confidential wink. "Yes," he said: "I have bought a good stock, and I don't mind telling you now that I have been swinging in and out of the Post Office all day buying hundreds of penny stamps." Trying to suppress a smile, I answered, "I saw you swinging, and you were pretty active; but, for all that, I am afraid you will have to swing days more." "Now, what do you mean?" he said, turning in his chair and facing me with a slight shadow beginning to appear on his jolly fat face. "Well," I said, "you see there is such an enormous stock of the pennies—in fact, it is the one value that the Post

Office is really well off in" ; and then I told him the exact number of sheets there were. The blankest look I have ever seen on a man's face began to dawn on his, and I said, to cheer him up, "Never mind! Have a twopence-halfpenny swing to-morrow: they're the valuable ones." He did not answer, and sat there silently with a penny stamp, which he was in the act of sticking on an envelope, glued on his fat forefinger, gazing far away, with a dejected droop at the corners of his mouth ; and so I left him. Next morning, when I arrived at the Post Office to swing on the twopence-halfpenny values, I quite expected to see the Major there before me ; but gout had triumphed over philately, and the Major had given up stamps.

I am an enthusiastic stamp collector now, and I always shall be, but with this one reservation—I am determined never to surrender to the universal stamp collector's weakness of stealing. Others may walk uprightly through six days of the week about their ordinary affairs, and on Sunday afternoon move apart from the path of honesty to pilfer another collector's treasure while his face is turned away, out of politeness, to sneeze. But I—no : I shall never steal!

CHAPTER XIV

TOMMY AND HIS OFFICER

PERHAPS never before in the history of the English army has the relationship between Tommy and his officer been so clearly demonstrated as in the South African campaign. Therefore it strikes one as all the more remarkable that grave discussions should have arisen concerning the manner or manners of the British officer. But, I would ask, among whom did these questions first arise? Do they come from the lips of the British soldier? I answer, emphatically, "No." For the last two or three hundred years the English soldier has been led by the English gentleman—the ploughboy at the calf's tail gladly following his master's son to do battle for their common country. Tommy knows an English gentleman (to use an expressive vulgarism) "down to the ground," and he never makes a mistake. He will be led only by a gentleman, and in the ordinary way there is between the two a quiet understanding, and (I may say) a silent friendship, which is none the less real because, for reasons of discipline, it is unexpressed. The arguments that tended to

embitter friendly relations on the field of battle have arisen entirely among the ranks of our brave Colonial contingents, to whom the ordinary British officer, as Tommy knows him, is practically an unknown quantity.

I am quite prepared to admit that there are little manifestations of swagger and little exhibitions of side, which, after all, are only a part of the training of the regular British officer fresh from Eton or Harrow, and in the eyes of all sensible Englishmen are unworthy of notice. To be sure, the British officer has his faults, and these faults were almost exaggerated in South Africa, simply because there he was quite at his worst while the Colonial was quite at his best. It was really a war for the Colonial, and the mistake was that we did not make sufficient use of him. Undoubtedly the British officer is as capable as man can be, and that he possesses many superb qualities has been clearly demonstrated during the campaign; but he was doing a work in South Africa that was entirely new to him, a work that tended, moreover, to point out his shortcomings, which were, as a rule, merely lack of proper training. He had not been taught to adapt himself to all places and conditions. He was not able to make a cup of tea when we halted for a few minutes on the march; he knew nothing of the rifle; he did not know how to use a map, or understand his horse; in fact, he was ignorant of a thousand little details which are all absolutely necessary to the making of a soldier for any other warfare than European. Instead of being helped, the British officer is handicapped by his training, his



OUTSPANNING



slightly affected manner, and his intimate knowledge of the Red Book, which in any other war would have meant everything to him, but was of no service whatever in South Africa. There is a certain type of young officer who studies the Red Book closely, and will take an immense amount of trouble, after a long day's march, in calling out a waggon which strikes him as not being in an absolutely plumb line with its fellows. Oxen have been dying by hundreds on the way, and the remaining ones are almost too weak to drag their loads along ; nevertheless, this young officer, probably aged nineteen, swaggers up to look at them with one eye cocked along the line, behaving for all the world like an elephant stacking timber. Probably he finds that a waggon is three feet out of line, and the fainting oxen are compelled to make a circuit of three-quarters of a mile before his sense of correctness can be appeased. All this narrowness is naturally irritating beyond words to the Colonial, and goes far to destroy any sympathy between the two. Here I must admit that I agree with the Colonial. Although there is much that is paltry in the education of the British officer, this unnecessary study of the Red Book seems to me to be the most futile of all, for it cramps the soldier to extinction. His one idea is to act up to it. He peeps at the world critically from over its pages ; every one is judged by it ; even I and my art have come in for a share of his abuse concerning my disregard of that important volume. "How can you hope to paint a battle-piece," he would say, "until you

have learnt the number of men to a battalion? It is quite ridiculous of you to attempt it!"

Naturally, all these faults and failings are due to the insufficiency of the officer's training; but there is a certain type of officer who is really rather worthless in himself—namely, the man who has taken up soldiering more or less as an accomplishment, as a smart thing to do, and puts about as much energy into it as he does into water-colour painting, horse-racing, literature, or any one of a score of other fads. He is certainly a very good all-round man. He can tell a funny story; he knows the best places at which to dine in London; he knows the difference between a Botticelli and a Burne-Jones; but as a specialist in soldiering he does not impress you as being at all brilliant. He does not strike you even as being an enthusiast—a man who has devoted his whole life to the one big and all-absorbing subject of soldiering.

Take the rifle. I have talked to scores of officers about this, their most important, weapon; for, being an enthusiastic rifle-shot myself, I was anxious to know in what direction it could be improved. I found as a rule that not only did the officers fail to take the slightest interest in the subject, but also that the moment I began to talk technically of even the most elementary details connected with the weapon, such as the flight of a bullet or the bent parabola, they were hopelessly at sea. They invariably ended all arguments by saying, "O! I prefer the Mauser," giving no reason for this preference, it being sufficient, forsooth, that they pre-

FIRING THE 6-INCH GUNS



ferred it. Whenever I talked to an officer of converting one's rifle into a match rifle, I noticed that he always took the same elementary line, that in warfare one hadn't time to attempt anything subtle, while in reality, as every one knows, there were innumerable opportunities for sharp-shooting in South Africa, as most of the work was done at long ranges. That is just where this type of officer fails as a specialist. All the elementary information that he gathers from the Red Book did not help him one little bit in this South African war. When six men find themselves alone on a kopje with the enemy in sight, does it tell the officer in command how to act? Certainly not. Therefore, they can do nothing ; and the Red Book gentleman finds himself suddenly whisked off on his way towards Pretoria. Not so the specialist. A position of this kind does not surprise him in the least.

Curiously enough, among all his various accomplishments, the Jack-of-all-trades officer of whom I have spoken clings to Art with the greatest degree of affection—call it affectation, what you will,—and he has generally what is called a "pretty touch" in water-colour. He chooses this medium, I fancy, because it happens to depend more upon accident than any other, and he can dispense with a knowledge of drawing more easily, for it is ten chances to one that a quantity of colour swum about on paper will dry in interesting blobs. They all have their recipes and their methods, and, without the slightest knowledge of Art generally, manage to give one valuable hints as to the painting of

a sunset; but how they do it I never can make out. If I have heard these descriptions once, I have heard them a hundred times; and it is all so naïve, so childishly simple and fresh, that I am entertained by it on every occasion. They always decline to talk of war at a dinner-party. "It is so boring, you know"; but they will talk by the hour in an affected effeminate way of water-colour, for they say, in common with the young lady from a seminary, "It is such a very pleasant art!" Curiously enough, they all begin in the same way: "Do you know, Mr. Menpes, water-colour seems to me to come nearer nature than any other medium." "And pastel?" I enquire gently, endeavouring to look intelligent, while they simply spring on this subject and devour it whole. They will not be led so easily from the favourite theme, and soon leave the pastel, to plunge into the midst of a string of recipes that they have originated for water-colour painting. In the first place, you must take great pains not to ruin the surface of your paper, which is fatal; next, with a large sable brush, you take a pure cobalt blue and wash it over the surface, being careful at the same time to tilt your block at a convenient angle to allow of the colour flowing down to the base. "And I have been adding a little Venetian blue of late," he will exclaim enthusiastically, in much the same way that I have heard a lady say when choosing a ribbon, "No, no: I think it's puce." Such subtle distinctions amaze a painter! Then, when painting the Alps, the water-colourist generally finds that it is better to use a little Chinese white in the

distant mountains, adding touches of cadmium to pick out the trees, and burnt sienna in their shadows, while the colour deviating from the sky becomes warmer and warmer, until finally, when the foreground is reached, in order to make it appear to come well forward in the picture, it is advisable to put in a figure—woman preferable—a woman with a vermilion shawl. Here you can tell by the man's expression that he loves putting in that touch—in fact, he would paint the picture for the sake of the shawl alone.

This type of staff officer you will generally meet at Cape Town, where he is petted and spoilt by the women, attends dinner-parties, and has little to recommend him beyond his artistic tastes, his voice, his complexion, and his smart scarlet and gold tunic. But it is interesting to trace the career of this little man, from the period of dinner-parties and silly women, to the front. You meet him first at Orange River, occupying an official position—perhaps as censor. Here you find him with the red-and-gold facings a little tarnished, less of a dandy now that he has not silly women to dine with him, while his complexion is going fast. Then, when you meet him at the front, where he is sleeping on the veldt and dining off a biscuit and a quarter, he has no complexion at all; the decorations to his khaki in the way of scarlet and gold are completely gone; all affectations have disappeared; he has ceased to be a water-colourist; and he has become a man—a simple Britisher and often a very fine fellow. Now, when I talk of the "water-colourist" I mean a

very different stamp of man from the officer of imagination: I mean men who love Nature, men who have a true appreciation of Art,—and there were many of them in South Africa. I do not mean to say that Art and soldiering cannot go together. They can, and undoubtedly in the future the race that will take the foremost place among the nations will be those people who have a living art among them and are people of imagination. The Japanese are a nation of artists; yet they are splendid fighters. Japan is undoubtedly destined to be a ruling nation, and it is the Japs' power of imagination that is their great strength. Thus, when I talk disdainfully of the "water-colourist" I do not include under that category all soldiers who paint. On the contrary, I mean only those officers, like the gentlemen I have met, who talk of painting as "a very pleasant art." But the British officer in South Africa showed himself to be on the whole a splendid fellow, handicapped by his training, but still a man of superb qualities. And if ever there was a country or conditions that laid bare a man's character, that country is South Africa. In its bright and searching light, you saw men, for perhaps the first time in their lives, as they really were. If a man had faults, South Africa drew them to the surface; they could not be hidden; there, as in no other country in the world, you were enabled to see down to the very root of the man.

But as for Tommy—well, I scarcely dare to speak of him, lest I should wax too enthusiastic in his praises. I search about for a word that could aptly describe this

splendid fellow, but find none, except perhaps that he is glorious! Tommy is the man that has made no mistake. He has done the right thing all through the campaign, and he has proved to us, as to all the world, that he is the finest soldier in creation. When the campaign is over Tommy will come out on top, right on top; and if he is to be judged at all he must be judged on a ladder by himself. With whom else can he be compared? All that he wanted was proper handling.

I listen to the table-talk of men in London when they speak brilliantly and fluently of the superiority of the German army over our own, and talk of the deterioration of the British Empire, now that we are drawn more or less into line with other European Powers in the race for supremacy; but I think to myself as I hear them, "What European Power could show a finer army than ours in the field of battle? What set of men could match themselves against our Tommies?" My reason answers, None. People in England have no conception of what a delightful creature Tommy really is: not vulgar, not coarse, as you would naturally expect to find a body of men after having lived on the veldt for so many months and under such conditions to be; not vulgar, but clean-minded and altogether delightful. How I wish that these poor Anglophobia-bitten people could only have seen our men, for example, on the day that the post came into camp, seated in groups on the veldt reading their letters from home! One peep, I feel convinced, would have been sufficient to win them

immediately. The majority of the men never had any letters at all; but to see the colossal pride with which the favoured ones marched back from the Post Office with their precious letters was too funny for words. Their bearing almost suggested a cake-walk in its swagger and importance. I am sure that if Tommy's missus only knew the joy her letters gave him she would have written far more frequently. If she had seen her old man carry her letter away to a quiet spot, where he wrestled with it by himself, his mouth working hard the while; or, better still, if she could have seen him beckoning proudly to his pals to sit round the fire while he read aloud to them passages from her interesting epistle,—she would have been much flattered, and have treated Tommy to at least one letter a week, instead of perhaps one in three months. He was just as proud as he could be over this letter, and to me it was the prettiest sight in the world to watch his face as he read aloud to his mates the witticisms of "the old woman," or perhaps the "kid," and the half grin with which he would begin "'Dearest Walter,'—I like that, mates: there are plenty of Walters; but I am the dearest"—while roars of laughter met this opening sally.

The English Tommies are in my opinion the most good-natured and the most generous fellows in the world. I have roughed it with them. I have camped on the veldt with them, under all sorts of conditions; but I have always found them happy and contented, however desperate the situation. In fact, they always seem

MULE WAGGON IN DIFFICULTIES



to me to be happier on short commons and amid difficult circumstances than they are in comparative luxury. When a cart has sunk up to its axle in a thick bog, when the horses are pulling and straining, and everything seems the most hopeless—that seems to be the moment when our soldiers joke and laugh the loudest. They pull and they sing together happily ; and in the end, because of this very courage and the indomitable pluck and energy with which they set to work, they overcome difficulties which seem the most disastrous, and therefore achieve success where with other men failure would be inevitable. I have often taken the opportunity of any real difficulty of this kind to stand and make a sketch of the scene, when suddenly, just in the middle of some terrific strain, a man would remark, with inimitable humour, "Well, you've got a picture fit to paint this time, mister, and no mistake"; after which these jolly fellows would all burst out laughing, while the cart would slip back again into its former position, axle-deep in the mud.

Curiously enough, even under difficulties of this kind you very seldom hear the Tommies using vulgar words. Occasionally they swear among themselves, but in such a fresh sort of language that it does not offend a bit. When the naval guns came along the language was rather more quaint, and now and then Tommy turned round in amazement at hearing such a string of new words : nothing pleases him more than to pick up a new word from a sailor, and a moment after you hear him mumbling it over to himself with great relish.

Every one in South Africa seemed to realise that Tommy was a man to be loved as well as respected. The enemy, the Afrikanders, the civilians—all loved him, and could not help showing it. And Tommy has such good taste! He is refined and considerate when you would least expect it of him—for example, when he came in touch with the enemy as prisoners his behaviour was too beautiful for words. Of course, he always made it quite clear that he was the master, and he could not resist patronising a little; while to see Tommy talking to an educated University Boer was sometimes very amusing. But he took these poor forlorn prisoners under his own particular wing, as it were. His whole time was spent in doing a thousand and one kind little actions to help and cheer them. His one great idea was to "buck" them all up in order not to make them feel so hopelessly out of it. You would see him going about distributing beef-tea and cheery words wherever he went, hunting about for a bit of string that was to form a boot-lace for some poor footsore prisoner; in fact, Tommy felt for these men deeply, and would put himself out of his way to attend to their comforts. To see Tommy with a Boer woman was still more delightful. His behaviour was chivalry itself. Whenever a woman appeared on the scene, whether as a prisoner or the mistress of her own farmhouse, the men were perfectly charming. They chaffed each other among themselves, to flatter her; while the woman showed that she was flattered by trotting round, giving Tommy this and Tommy that—in fact, she fell in love with him at once.

A PRISONER



And such was his delicacy that any refined girl, had she been physically fitted, could have marched all the way to Bloemfontein and never have received the smallest slight from the British soldier. I wish Mr. Stead could have been there!

What was my surprise, therefore, to read, on my return to England, an article written by Mr. Richard Harding Davis in which he spoke very strongly concerning the rudeness of the British soldiers in Pretoria to women! After having sojourned so long with Tommy and his officer at the front, and knowing the healthy lives these men led, I would stake my life, although I have never been in Pretoria, that there is not an ounce of truth in his statement. Then, again, there have been stories lately of Tommy's brutality in robbing and pilfering farmhouses. They are all grossly exaggerated. I marched the whole way to Bloemfontein with Lord Roberts's column, and I saw Tommy in these farmhouses over and over again; but there was certainly no chopping down of doors, or destroying of harmoniums, or throwing of Bibles out of windows. I have seen doors used, but only when they have been absolutely necessary, for firewood; and the man lies who says that there was unnecessary damage done to farmhouses on that march to Bloemfontein.

To be sure, if Tommy got into a garden he would eat all the fruit there, and that like a streak of lightning, prickly pears and all—for he soon learnt to attack a prickly pear in the most dexterous manner. But if the people were to hoist the white flag, or to crave our pro-

tection in any way, Tommy would not so much as look at a prickly pear even. When we first arrived at Bloemfontein we were surprised to find the inhabitants all quite drunk—with joy may be, but none the less drunk —while our Tommies were beautifully sober, for the simple reason that they had not been allowed to drink.

Through his great good-nature Tommy got cruelly imposed upon by the Afrikander and the local men. He paid exorbitant prices for things which by sheer force he might have insisted on buying at the usual price. When the small farmer called at the camp with his highly-priced wares, Tommy might easily have said, "Get along with you: I am not going to pay you any more," if he had not been so good-natured. But by the time he had spent all his money on a few tickies for his wife's bangle and a trifle or two for the kids, the excitement had died down, and after he had been in Bloemfontein for a few weeks you would find that he had changed slightly—he was not quite such a happy person. Tommy wants difficulties to contend with, not luxury; and after a time he naturally becomes restless and even a little demoralised. At last things became so desperate that a Tommy, by way of causing a diversion in the general lethargy, conceived the brilliant idea that he would like to have a complete wash-up: so he paid a visit to a laundryman who happened to have a bath-house attached. He went to have his bath, and left his clothing in a soiled pile just outside the door. Meanwhile the proprietor, a very clean man, came along; and, it being an unusual thing in his establishment, he



A GARDEN AT BLOEMFONTEIN



instantly espied this khaki uniform, a costume that had been slept in for many months. He paused before it for a few moments, and then, suddenly conceiving a brilliant inspiration, carted it all away with him. While Tommy was taking his tub the proprietor was washing the uniform and drying it by a special apparatus, until at length, when Tommy emerged, he found a spick and span new uniform waiting for him, all folded and clean, on a chair. "Hullo," he said, "this is not mine." "O yes, it is: I have just washed it," answered the proprietor. "No charge," he added, as Tommy vaguely felt in his empty pockets. Tommy put it on, and sailed triumphantly down the street, with crowds of dirty men at his heels. Here was a fellow who was wearing a spanking new suit of clothes, a suit that sparkled in the sun, such as no officer possessed; and this clean freak was made a hero of accordingly. Very soon, however, the news spread among the troops that this was the work of the speculative laundryman, who was instantly deluged with requests for more clean suits. It was an experiment on his part; but never did mortal man make such a colossal stroke in business. Gradually clean soldiers, both officers and men, began to appear all over the town, until at length the laundryman had cleansed the entire army.

CHAPTER XV

THE ENEMY

PREJUDICED as I am in favour of my countrymen, and absolutely persuaded of the justice of our cause, I am nevertheless keenly alive to the many good points which so frequently characterise our gallant foe. I am a Britisher who feels strongly that we have done absolutely the right thing. I am, however, an artist, and I realise that no picture can be a picture which is all shine or all shade. The Boers are not all so bad as they are painted by those who do not know them. On the other hand, they are not all angels. In a word, they are human beings, and it is as human beings, not pawns on a political chessboard, that I describe them. I have studied them under every condition. I have seen them in groups of threes, in batches of dozens, collected together in thousands, at Simonstown, Jacobsdal, and Klip Drift; and not only have I seen them, but also I have talked with them, studied them, compared them with other nationalities. I have generally found that the burgher is rather a fine fellow — misled and cruelly deceived by Mr. Kruger and Mr. Steyn, but on



BOER PRISONERS LED INTO KLIP DRIFT BY C.I.V.



the whole a stalwart honest personage—honest according to the lights of Oliver Cromwell's days, to which period he properly belongs.

I was continually hearing wild and exciting descriptions of the enemy from men who had come in touch with them; but personally I never saw a Boer at all, except as a prisoner or connected with the ambulance work. And that is just what amazed me in South Africa—this invisible enemy—the bullets proceeding from hidden guns that shot men down by your side without a moment's warning. The secrecy and mystery of it all impressed me terribly. There was nothing picturesque or exciting about the battles, but just this fearful, quiet butchery. Although I never saw a Boer on the battlefield, I have had many excellent opportunities of studying him as a prisoner; and one of the most impressive sights I ever saw in South Africa was at Klip Drift, when the 4000 prisoners were brought in from Paardeberg. The day before they arrived General Cronje was brought into camp, driven in a light four-wheeled cart and accompanied by his wife, his nephew, and a rough-looking man whom we took to be a servant. They were driven to the tent prepared for them, where they remained during their whole stay in camp, and whence they could not be coaxed out. A superb dinner—superb, that is, amid the circumstances—was prepared by General Pole-Carew for General Cronje, of which he was too surly to partake. The General treated the prisoners with every courtesy; yet they never spoke one word to him. In fact, the

only time we heard Cronje's voice at all was when he first arrived, and thrust his head angrily out of the tent to say, in Dutch, "My wife shall not leave me!" so afraid was he that Madame Cronje should be taken off to another tent.

The great Boer General was not prepossessing. In fact, one did not like to look at him at all—so coarse were his manners, so unpicturesque was his appearance. He wore a loose, ill-fitting overcoat, a felt hat drawn so far over the ears that it almost rested on his shoulders; the head was pushed forward, with a brutal, cruel expression. General Cronje is a heavy man, cunning and vulgar, with a long, unkempt beard, and rude manners. He sulked all the time. Poor Mrs. Cronje was a pathetic sight. I never saw a woman look so ragged; she was clothed in a black dress browned and baked with the sun and rain. Her face wore a hungry look, as though she had been starving; her hair was dishevelled with the long nights and days spent in the trenches at Paardeberg. I had thought of sketching her; but she did not lend herself to decorative treatment. This very same hair, when she departed next morning, she had the misfortune to leave behind in her tent—a great mass of it, which was eagerly pounced upon by a group of doctors, all collectors, who divided it among their friends as mementos. I was offered a lock myself, but said, "No, thanks!"

I had very little chance of sketching General Cronje. He rarely showed himself, and my only chance was on

EVENING AT KLIP DRIFT



the morning of their departure, while they were forced to wait in their cart for three-quarters of an hour before the procession started. We had attached to the brigade a surgeon who was an enthusiastic photographer, and he came with his cinematograph to get a record of this final scene — the departure of General Cronje. This cinematograph was a funny thing. It occupied an entire Cape cart, and received more attention and care than almost any waggon on the march. Wherever the Guards Brigade went, there went this wretched machine. It never missed anything, and whenever you heard its terrible buzz! buzz! you might be certain that something of unusual interest was happening. All through that long march to Bloemfontein, you would see the doctor and his cinematograph lumbering along in an enormous waggon, always occupying a prominent position. And here he was with his machine again, taken out and carefully placed. On went the procession, mounted C.I.V. and waggons — on went the buzz. The moment Cronje came within earshot, he popped his head out of the window in abject terror. Then Mrs. Cronje was seen to get up hastily, lean over her husband, and tear down the blind in irritation. The buzzing went on, and the procession passed by. The surgeon, occupied with his machine, had not noticed this little by-play; but when I told him what had occurred he threw up his cap in great glee, and shouted, "I've got something historic — something historic!"

All that morning I watched the preparations for a

still greater event—the arrival of the 4000 prisoners from Paardeberg; this, indeed, would occupy a page in history. These preparations were colossal and wondrously exciting. First of all, large canvas troughs, filled with hundreds of gallons of water, were prepared —for horses, thought I; and I pictured to myself the gorgeous sketches I should make of tired horses drinking. To my great surprise, I found that these troughs were not destined for horses but for men, women, and children to drink from; in fact, scarcely any horses, except those of the commanders and one little pony called Champagne Charlie (whom I shall describe later), were brought into camp at all. It was on February 28, and the whole of the Guards Brigade was full of expectation. I was up at half-past four in the morning, determined to put superhuman effort into this superb opportunity of painting a series of pictures of the enemy. They were not to arrive until ten o'clock; but still I was up at this early hour, bracing myself, and drifting about the camp making preliminary sketches of the place and the scenery. Not only did I secure these pictures, but also I secured what was almost as important in my eyes at the time—a kidney! Now, no one realises what that means—a kidney! At least, no one who has not gone through the same experience of camp life would thoroughly realise the importance of this valuable addition to the rations. They were unheard-of delicacies in camp, these kidneys; they certainly never reached the General's mess; no one even saw one; they seemed to melt into thin air—early



BOER PRISONERS ON THE WAY FROM PAARDEBERG



morning air. But from that day on, through the help of the Quartermaster-Sergeant—a very important personage—and my own untiring energy, I was enabled to add a kidney or two every morning to my breakfast of biscuits—breakfasts which were now far more sumptuous than any General Pole-Carew ever had. This kidney meant everything to me, for at that time food and pictures were all I had to think about; and I put a tremendous amount of energy into the procuring of the one and the preparation of the other, although, I fancy, at the beginning of my career I paid more attention to the former.

The General and I, as it neared ten o'clock, were standing waiting for the first sight of the prisoners on the horizon, trying to realise the importance of the event. One hour passed — nothing happened. Presently we noticed the line of the horizon blackening—looking through our telescopes, we saw that this thin black line was indeed our prisoners advancing. Gradually we saw the line develop like a string of black cotton into worsted; then, getting grayer and thicker, it became rugged twine, appearing more rugged and more broken as time went on. We stood there almost silent during this solemn, grand procession—this smart Guardsman and I, both feeling very much the same; for the General presently broke the silence by uttering my own thoughts as he said, "This is a scene that can never be described, and it never will be described; painters cannot do it; we can never convey this scene to others."

Very slowly the procession advanced, so that gradually,

as in a chemical process, its constituent parts became clearly visible. Now it looked like a trail of ants; now it suggested locusts; anon it broke up into irregular patches and became clearer and clearer, until we were conscious of this enormous mass of humanity that gradually spread until it filled the whole landscape.

Our soldiers had in the meantime formed a square, into which the prisoners were marched, where the canvas troughs were arranged. The moment the procession had drawn near enough to realise that there was water to be had, there was one mad rush of parched, eager people, drinking almost like animals. After satisfying their thirst, they sank down in groups on the ground, thoroughly exhausted, but in an orderly way. They were obviously tired out—men, women, and children,—blistered and footsore; for, having always been in the habit of riding, they had probably never walked such a distance in their lives. It was almost an Oriental scene, so brilliant was the colouring—red umbrellas, scarlet blankets, brilliant blues and yellows, as vivid in colour as a Moorish crowd, and standing out in violent contrast to the dull khaki of the men who mounted guard.

From one of the many groups there rose a hymn. I was amazed. It seemed scarcely credible; but there it was—a hymn taken up by the various groups and swelling into a loud full-throated chorus. It was brilliant sunshine, scorchingly hot; and these weary, dusty, footsore people, some of them suffering agony (you saw it in their faces), instead of rolling



BOER PRISONERS



over and going to sleep like logs, were all putting great energy into the singing of a hymn, eager to pray and praise. This impressed me deeply; and as I wandered round among them with the General (he, with his charm of manner and graceful sympathetic words winning over every soul he addressed), I pointed out to him the group that had started singing the hymn, and said, "What a power this psalm-singing is—surely it must help these men in a way as fighters?" "Give me an army of psalm-singing Britishers," replied the General, very promptly; "and we would carry everything before us—nothing could resist it!"

I left the General to wander among the prisoners, sketch-book in hand, chatting and sketching them until late afternoon, studying the various types, and listening to their little stories of home life, and in that way getting a more thorough knowledge of the Boers than if I had lived among them for many months. I wanted to be alone with these people—to find out for myself their true natures, to study the men who were soon to be British subjects. Here were men of all classes and character gathered together; never was there a better chance of gauging the nature of a people. I talk of men; but there were women too—women who had stuck to their people all through the campaign with a tenacity that was simply splendid. The bulk of the prisoners were boys or old men; in fact, the greater proportion of them were boys, almost children.

They were a joyous crowd, and seemed quite proud to be prisoners. Many of the men, especially the old

ones, looked like Biblical subjects. One old man I talked to had three sons and half-a-dozen grandsons. This family had fought together all through the campaign, and were all prisoners with him. I had expected, from the many descriptions I had heard of the enemy, to see a collection of dirty, long-bearded animals. This I did not find at all. They were dirty, yes; but I could scarcely see how they could have been otherwise after all those weeks spent in the stinking trenches. They may also be dirty in their home life; but I know nothing of that, for nearly all my experience of them was gathered on the day when I mingled with the prisoners at Klip Drift, and I am stating here just what I have seen with my own eyes and not what I have heard from others.

The Boers—dirt or no dirt—are a polite nation, and show in many ways a delicacy that is most unusual. I started to make a sketch of a prisoner, severely wounded, who was seated in an ambulance waggon. I wished to make this sketch not so much because of the man as because of the cart and its surroundings; but, as he was the centre of a group of other men, and was sitting forward in rather a conspicuous position, he thought I was sketching him, and called out in a very injured tone as I approached, "Go on! Sketch me! I can't prevent you, for I am a prisoner, and not only a prisoner but wounded." I instantly folded up my sketch book, and put it back in my pocket, saying as I did so that I should of course not dream of adding another stroke to the sketch, and that I was very sorry that I had hurt



BOER CHILDREN



his feelings by attempting it. I noticed his face soften; he beckoned to me to come up. "Please go on with the sketch," he whispered. "No," I said. "I would rather not. In fact, I couldn't do it now. You're wounded, and it seems like taking an unfair advantage." "Ah, but do!" he begged. "If you don't you'll hurt my feelings, and I shall feel badly." I naturally did finish the sketch, and he thanked me sincerely for the trouble that I had taken, and gave me the address of his wife in Johannesburg, begging that I would go and see her there and talk to her. I was to picture himself and the scene, and try to put it before her eyes exactly as I saw it then. He said, "I shall probably never see her again: so describe the day; describe the wonderful sight of all us prisoners; describe this cart and myself; and try to make her realise the scene as you see it to-day, for it will help her." Unthinking idiots have described these Boers as senseless people with no power of thought or imagination in them; yet here on the lonely veldt, sorely wounded, a prisoner among strangers, was a Boer who could think and speak so superbly. I promised, shook hands, and left him with tears in his eyes.

Shortly after, Mr. Scott, the correspondent of the *Illustrated London News*, came up to me and said, "I want to buy a pony. I know that one of the prisoners will sell me his, and I want you to give me your opinion on the animal." My opinion indeed! A painter's opinion of a pony! I knew nothing of ponies, save from the decorative standpoint. But still I took

interest in the pony, for he was " Champagne Charlie." Charlie's owner was an old man with a white beard ; he had three sons—one was killed, and the other two were prisoners. His only friend was this pony that Mr. Scott proposed to buy from him. I stood by, watching the transaction, and I never saw a more pathetic sight. Champagne Charlie, a dejected, thin, unsightly creature with a sore back, standing, with that back turned to his master, gazing far away with a hopeless look—it may have been my imagination, but it seemed as though it dared not look its master in the face. Mr. Scott handed over his one pound for the horse, and took hold of the old rope bridle to lead away this old man's only friend. Just as he did so I noticed the old man (who all this time had appeared not to notice his horse—in fact, he had scarcely looked at his friend) quickly put out his hand, and, with his head turned away, softly press his horse's side as he passed. A little action, quickly done, and almost unconsciously, by the old man—just a fond, firm pressure, not a pat : no one noticed it but me, and no one noticed the empty look of his face deepening into lines of agony, and the old eyes glistening, as he watched poor Champagne Charlie pass away.

Incident after incident of this character occurred that day among the Boer prisoners—tender little touches that would have escaped the eye of any one but a student of human nature and a keen observer of faces—little touches that showed them to be not the mere animals that they are so generally depicted, but men with real and deep feelings. They showed themselves



BOER WAGGON LEFT BY CRONJE IN HIS FLIGHT TO PAARDEBERG



to be really splendid fellows, and in the near future, if we handle them in the right way, they will become good and peaceable citizens.

I do not think that the intelligence of the Boers as a rule is of a particularly high order. They are in most things very much behind the times; but I have found them to be a simple, sincere, and God-fearing people. The men are fine wiry fellows, and bear pain bravely, as I can testify from personal experience. I was talking to a doctor when one of the prisoners came up and requested to be allowed to ride in the ambulance waggon, as he was unfit to march. The doctor instantly suspected malingering, and the prisoner was examined in my presence. To our horror, it was found that the man had a terrible wound where a bullet had traversed straight through his body, entering under the left arm. The poor fellow had been going about for days in this condition, marching with the rest in the broiling sun, masking his pain under a smiling face; and, now that it became unbearable, he calmly suggested that it perhaps might need attention. The fortitude of this man made me think that either the Boers are of tougher calibre than our Tommies, and less sensitive to pain, or that their own great pluck and firm trust in God make them behave like heroes.

The Boers have quaint ideas of right and wrong. Although on the whole they spoke the truth, whenever I asked a man any question connected with warfare—the number of men killed in a battle, etc.—I noticed that he invariably told me a downright lie, and

that with a perfectly easy conscience, feeling that he was doing a noble and just thing. The Boers are a very simple and primitive people, and must be judged from their own standard of morality. These lies that they tell us so glibly, lies told to help their cause, are lies in which they feel they are perfectly justified. They do not consider that they are lies at all, and are firmly convinced that God approves them. After all, "white lies" are not wholly unknown in Belgravia or Grosvenor Square. The astonishing reports published in the *Bloemfontein Friend* of the number of men killed after a great battle were all ridiculously untrue; but they are somewhat mitigated when one thinks of the curious way the Boers make up their casualty list. Unless a man is thoroughly disabled or is a recognised burgher, he is not counted,—and there were many such men.

Some of the prisoners I talked to had no real idea of what the fight was about; but they all had their own private notions of it, which they clung to tenaciously, and these were sometimes very amusing. I had a long conversation with one old lady about Queen Victoria. She was a kindly old thing, and amused me enormously. I found her sitting under an old disused waggon with seven children swarming all over her—some swinging on ropes, others seated in the spokes of the muddy wheels,—joyous, happy little urchins at home already in the old canvas-covered cart. Every now and then one of the young acrobats in the course of his swing would come whack into the mother's face; but

BOER PRISONERS LEAVING KLIP DRIFT



she, too much interested in the all-absorbing topic of Queen Victoria to notice such trifles, never for one moment allowed them to alter the benignity of her countenance or the fluency of her conversation. Queen Victoria, she said, was a good woman, and had no idea of what her rooineks were doing in South Africa; she sincerely felt that it was the duty of some one to inform Her Majesty. I never saw any one so genuinely sorry and so truly sympathetic as this old Dutch lady was for our Queen. They were going to win—of course they were—because they had God with them and couldn't help it. These 4000 prisoners were nothing at all, and would only spur the Boers on to do better; but still she continually repeated, "I do think some one ought to tell the Queen."

While we were talking a Tommy approached my little group with a bucketful of strong beef tea which he was to distribute among the women and children, and was preparing to start with this family. Now, this beef tea was a great luxury, a thing we never had ourselves, not even the General; and Tommy handed the bucket to the old woman with a grin, as though conferring a favour. To his surprise, she folded her arms tightly over her shawl, and a cunning look came into her eyes as she shook her head as if to say, "Ha! I know what you are going to do; but I am not a fool —you can't take me in"; and then appealing to me, for she seemed to think I would sympathise, she said sharply, jerking her thumb in the direction of the bewildered Tommy, who was now tackling the children,

"He thought he was going to poison us—didn't he?" "O no, I assure you," I began; but she would have none of it, and declared that he wanted to kill them off. The children meanwhile, scared to death, had all rushed to their mother, and were clinging about her skirts, screaming lustily. It was one of the prettiest sights in the world, and one of the most delightful, to see Tommy standing in the middle of this little group with his bucket of untouched beef tea, ogling at the seven impish brown faces turned up to him, and going through all sorts of antics to persuade them that it was "tip-top." It was a thrilling moment for him. He had been entrusted with the feeding of these hungry children, and had been tickled to death at the thought of doing it; but here were these seven smug-faced kids and their stout mother, who looked at him out of the corners of their eyes with expressions as if to say, "We know!" In vain he bawled at the top of his voice that the beef tea was a luxury that not even the General had—this last with emphasis. It was quite touching to see the way the poor fellow, so evidently distressed, tried to coax them. At last, to illustrate his meaning more clearly, he began to taste the food himself. This impressed them, and the seven small faces gazed in astonishment as Tommy sipped and sipped and went on sipping, wishing them to understand, I suppose, that it could be taken in quite large quantities. Poor half-rationed Tommy went on drinking, his eyes getting larger and larger, until he suddenly caught my eye, and I thought he would have dropped the bucket.

He hurriedly passed on to the next group, which was principally composed of men, who received the beverage; but the women and children stoutly refused, preferring to chew little strings of sun-dried meat and the trifles we could give them.

This meat is called "biltong." It is fresh meat cut up in strips with the grain, salted, and hung up to dry for two or three days; then it is perfect, and eight pounds of it, together with three pounds of twice-baked bread, will keep a man for a month. It struck me as being a very sensible diet, suited to the country, and better than the canned Maconochie horrors, the mixtures of meat and vegetables that we grew to loathe.

The outfit of a Boer when travelling is very simple. It consists of a macintosh, a pipe and tobacco, and a saddle which is used as a pillow.

I doubt whether the total abstainers would have been pleased with the conduct of the Boers on this occasion. One and all were eager to get spirit. Almost the first thing they asked for was alcohol. And this is what surprised me so—the combination of the two different elements in this crowd—the craving for drink and the enthusiastic psalm-singing. As I wandered from group to group among the prisoners I had some very interesting conversations with the men, and learnt a great deal, for they could all talk English fluently. I asked many of them about the firing at the Red Cross. One and all scouted the idea, and said that if there was any firing at the Red Cross it was an accident—a mistake that might easily have occurred, for

they had very few binoculars, and those they did have were bad ones; all the talk about the Zeiss lens was fiction.

In speaking of lyddite they all described its effect on a man in exactly the same way, and likened it to the sensation of being beaten all over with sticks. Nearly every man I talked to had any amount of Kruger money that he was anxious to exchange for English; and doubtless, though it makes one's heart ache to think of it, there were many two-shaft sovereigns given away that day for face value—in fact, many of them were prepared to exchange their money far below par—3d. for 2d. and so on. They little realised that in a very short time there was going to be a rush for their coins as curios—that the 3d. would be worth at least a shilling and the double-shaft sovereign £5 or even more. This craze for Kruger money grew like wildfire—very soon after you would see posted up in the shop windows, "KRUGER MONEY TAKEN." Everybody was eager for it; every Tommy was buying a threepenny bit to take home as a memento. I myself saw pennies, and never dreamt that there were probably many with double-shafts and worth five hundred times face value.

All the prisoners wore badges. Over and over again I tried to buy one, or, as I put it for sensitive reasons, to get one in barter; but it was of no use. The Boers would exchange money with you, but not their badges. A very old man told me that he was much hurt because he had offered £3000 to be allowed to go back to his farm, and was willing to sign an agreement to say that he



DUTCH VILLAGE NEAR EDENBURG



would never fight again. I thought him a hopeful subject, and immediately offered to buy the badge he was wearing; but he was just as jealous of it as the other prisoners were of theirs, and absolutely refused to sell it; which showed that, although he was willing to sign agreements, his principles remained unchanged.

One of the most interesting men I talked to was Major Albrecht, the Prussian artilleryman, who, by the way, was one of the first to start the psalm-singing on the arrival of the prisoners into camp. From him I learnt a great deal. I found him a very pleasant fellow. He was a typical soldier of fortune who loved fighting for fighting's sake. He talked in a very open manner of General Cronje, whose conduct at Paardeberg, he said, was bad; in fact, the only excuse he could find for Cronje was that he must have lost his head. Many and many a time he and other officers went to General Cronje and begged him on their knees to retire from his position; but Cronje only scoffed at them, repulsing them in an almost brutal way, saying that they were talking nonsense. The English could not surround them; they would never travel so far from the railway, and he was not going to move for any one. This obstinacy on the part of the Boer General seemed to impress every one. The prisoners could talk of nothing else; their dogs, if at all obstinate, they nicknamed "Cronje." They all complained bitterly of his mistakes at Paardeberg, and were quite natural and unreserved in their criticisms of his conduct there. I have often heard it said that, although General Cronje was a good

defender of kopjes, he was no good in the open; and one man, waxing confidential, gave me an amazing description of a curious system by which Cronje was enabled at any moment to conceal himself. It was rather complicated, and I could not quite grasp the drift of it; but it was very clear that whenever there were any stray shots flying about General Cronje made himself scarce.

Major Albrecht talked of our artillery practice, which, he declared, was poor, and said that very few men were killed by our guns. Lyddite they feared at first; but, as its effect was only to stun and not to kill, it ceased to be a terror. He ridiculed our method of handling guns so bitterly that I rather irritably asked him how they managed theirs. "Well, in the first place, we are not handicapped by rules and red books, but are simply governed by our common-sense," he said, rather pointedly. "If ten horses won't pull a gun, we use twenty and two or three score men. We are not handicapped in any way." I told him I had heard that "Long Tom" outside Kimberley was placed on a moving platform and raised and lowered by mechanism. This notion he laughed at, and said, "O dear no! The gun was placed on the top of a planked rubbish heap and run up the incline every time it was fired. You people, examining the gun through your telescopes, would first see the gun raised and then lowered, and you would say, 'Hullo! the Boers move their guns mechanically'; but that was not so. It was merely pulled up a gentle incline, with no mechanism at all."

CRONJE AND MAJOR ALBRECHT



Albrecht added that we should have been surprised if we had known how few men really handle these guns of theirs that do such havoc. It was the same with the Modder fights. Time after time two or three hundred men would hold at bay thousands of our troops, who, if they had only known, could have rushed the position. Luckily for the Boers, we never seemed to realise how few they were. This sort of thing was happening over and over again.

Major Albrecht told me of many very cute practices the Boers use for getting the better of their foe. For example, they would never dream of allowing a gun to get into our hands without first taking the precaution to tear away the breech-block. And it seemed to me, after some experience, that they tried not only to get the better of their enemy, but to get the better of one another as well. The Boers had developed into quite scientific pickpockets—but only on the field. They used to rob and cheat one another in the calmest way possible. They are experts in horse-stealing. One man told me of a dodge which struck me as being particularly cute. When a man has a horse that is in very poor condition, and he cannot afford to keep it, he chivies it out in the open, and allows some one to steal it. He knows perfectly well who has stolen the horse, but does not take any notice until some months have passed and the horse is fed up and in a ripe condition. Then he will promptly steal it back.

The Boers, however, have no idea of business from our standpoint. To watch a Boer out shopping is

amusing. He understands exchanging a sheep for a sheep; but he can't understand how it is possible to pay one shilling for an article and to receive sixpence change. I once saw a Boer enter a shop and ask the price of something, which, the shopman said, was 9d. The man scratched his head, looked bewildered, and shuffled out of the shop. He had only got a shilling! It is the same with banking. I have seen a man enter a bank, and ask for all his money out at once, carefully count over every coin, and then hand it back to the clerk saying, "That's all right. Now you can put it back again; I only wanted to see that it was all there." The Boers all call this war "The Queen's Raid," and cannot be made to understand it otherwise. Many of the Free State farmers complained bitterly to me of the Boers; for, although they are behindhand in most things, such as banking and farming, they understand commandeering to perfection. The farmers say that the Boers commandeer everything—they commandeer your sheep and oxen, and end by commandeering yourself. I have had some interesting experiences of the Free State farmer. On one occasion, after we had been breakfasting at a farm, and were just about to leave, the daughter came up to me, and whispered anxiously, "Will you please tell me just whereabouts the house will be blown up?" Wherever we went they all had the non-combatant Boers' exaggerated ideas of our cruelty and wickedness. They had evidently been misled, and it was difficult to make them believe that we did not intend to harm them.

DRIEFONTEIN



On paying a visit to Simonstown, where some prisoners were comfortably quartered, I was surprised to find that the Boers are quite an athletic race. Some of the men were in the middle of a game of football; others were swimming in the river—all boisterously happy. They were being treated splendidly, and they knew it. Many of them talked of cricket, football, and games generally; and I was surprised at their knowledge of our great players—many of them talked enthusiastically of Ranji as a bat, and of the Australian Blackham as a wicket-keeper. This was all a revelation to me, and went far to prove that we have splendid material to handle when we take over the two republics.

I talked to many of the men, and found them fine manly fellows. One, growing confidential, told me that he was distressed at the way in which they had handled the campaign. "We should have marched straight to Cape Town," he declared with vigour. "I and all my friends were amazed that we did not, for we had nothing to prevent us but the jealousy of the commandoes, which spoilt everything. And we had ready made such lovely flags of United South Africa!" he broke out in great grief. "It was a perfect flag—splendidly designed, and it's very disappointing—very." The poor man wept to think of this beautiful flag that was of no use. Many farmers were enthusiastic in praise of the English officer: they said he was smart and energetic. But there is one particular type that none of them can understand. That is the "masher" type, which strikes them as being funny and unwork-

manlike. One rough Boer farmer, a prominent man, then friendly with the British, told me that the first English officer he ever saw surprised him very much, for the officer rode up to him, put his eyeglass in his eye, looked him over from head to foot, and said "Er, have you seen any Boahs about here?" The farmer said that he did not know whether he was an Intelligence officer or not; but it certainly seemed rather an inane question.

During all the while I had stayed in South Africa I had never seen a Dutch woman until the General sent round to my tent one day asking me if I would care to have a very interesting subject for a picture; if so, I was to go and see him. When I arrived, I found two very charming, simple Dutch girls in rapid conversation with the General. They had come to implore our help in finding their young brother, who, they feared, had been commandeered by the Boers. From the girls I learnt the whole pathetic little story. They had a father, an old man who was now sitting in an upper room broken-hearted, and would not be comforted, because his eldest son had been killed during the Modder fights; and now the youngest, whom he had sent out to move cattle from one position to another, had not returned; he was only fourteen—sensitive and delicate—and to think of him having to fight was almost killing them. I learnt that the family were very influential people in the country, owning several farms; and these girls were left practically alone in the world. The General was talking to the elder sister, with whom I had a long

conversation before she left camp ; and at dinner that night he gave us a detailed description of his talk, and of the effect it produced upon her. She perfectly sympathised with the British, and thought we were a splendid people. She quite understood how greatly in the wrong they, the Boers, had been, and realised to the full the advantage it would be to them to be governed by English rule. Altogether, she was quite won over, and took a very healthy view—the General's view—of the whole affair. "And," he added, "this is the sort of work that we have got to do now ; it will be of the greatest value in the future : these people must be won over." "Now," I said, "shall I tell you what she said to me after your talk with her?" Then I explained how her manner had changed when she realised that I was not a soldier but a painter, there to paint beautiful pictures and not to fight. She became perfectly natural, and talked quite freely ; and I encouraged her to talk, for she was the first woman I had met for a long time. "Now," she said, "I have been talking to your General for some time, and, although it seems terrible to say so, I have been telling him a series of untruths. He was such a handsome man, with such a kind face! I had no idea an English officer could be so nice that I really wanted to believe everything he said, and I wanted his help." She did not really agree with him at all, and was convinced that the Boers would win, and that everything would turn out well in the end, because God was with them. "But, then," I said, "these four thousand prisoners!

Surely the war is nearly at an end?" "O no," she said, with a pitying shake of the head: "that does not surprise me at all—the capture of these men. It was a punishment, and we deserved it. It was Cronje whom God was punishing for getting too ambitious. He was thinking more of himself and less of his God. We needed that check; but we shall be all the stronger for it." She talked of the war with an assurance and conviction that surprised me. "This is a very wicked war," she declared. "It has been started by wicked rich men who wanted to make money for themselves. We know that, and I am sure that they are deceiving the Queen. She is a good woman, and would never allow it if she knew. Every night I pray to God that He will send some one to her that will open her eyes and tell her that she is being deceived." Nothing I could say would persuade her to the contrary. She told me that she and her sister were nurses all through the Modder fights, and she said, enthusiastically, "Ah, how often have I seen God help us there at times when there have only been two or three hundred of us holding a position in opposition to as many thousands! That was happening over and over again; but God prevented you from attacking us at the right moment. If you had only known, you could have made one big rush and destroyed us; but God would not allow you to know it." She waxed eloquent on this theme. After any victory that they had gained, this girl told me, they always thanked God for His help. They were always made to understand that whatever successes they had were God's work, not



BOER RED CROSS NURSES



their own, and if a man bragged of any brave deed he was immediately punished. This girl said: "How can we be conquered? Tell me in what way? We are all happy; and all you English who are settled in English towns like Bloemfontein—they are all happy. We have a perfect form of government; nothing could be better; and how then can we be anything else but sad at the prospect of a change? The only hope for you English will be to copy our government, and the more nearly you copy it the nearer you will be to success. That being the case, how can you expect us to find any pleasure in the change?"

The General was staggered to hear this totally opposite version of the girl's views; and realised what a colossal work it will be to pacify these people and convince them that our mode of government is better than theirs.

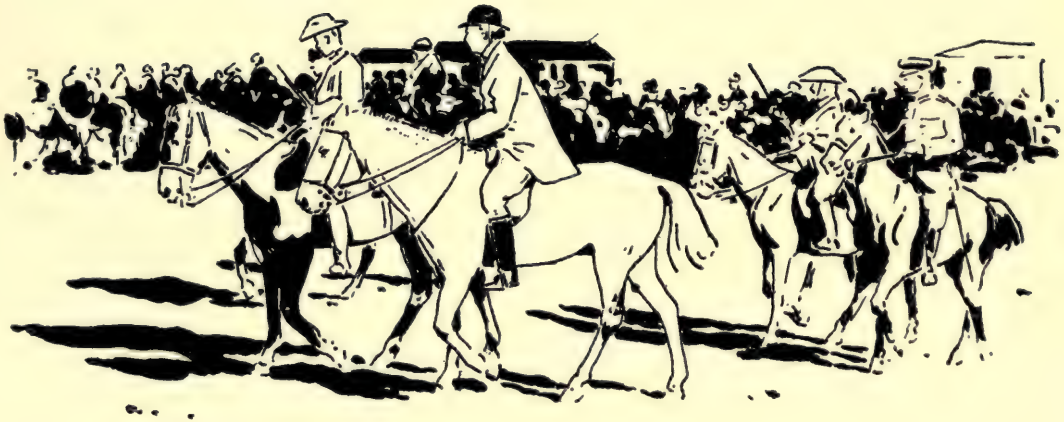
CHAPTER XVI

REFLECTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

As an artist, naturally, I have no habits of war ; but I have been accustomed all my life to use my eyes, and in South Africa it certainly did occur to me over and over again, as an observant outsider and the amateur, that neither Tommy nor his officer was properly trained. It strikes me all the more forcibly now that my journey is over, when I look back upon those months spent with the men on the veldt, and I begin to realise what splendid material Tommy is to work upon. How easily his imagination, which is allowed to lie fallow, could be kindled into life by proper handling ! The mind is there, though stagnant by disuse : you feel that at the very first sight of him, and nothing could be developed so well as his imaginative powers. I do not mean to say that Tommy has any keen appreciation of the Fine Arts—that would be too much to expect ;—but he certainly shows to a close observer that he is not totally devoid of imagination. As a nation, there is no doubt, we are badly educated. You find that in all walks of life technical education is still in its infancy in



SIR ALFRED MILNER INSPECTING C.I.V.



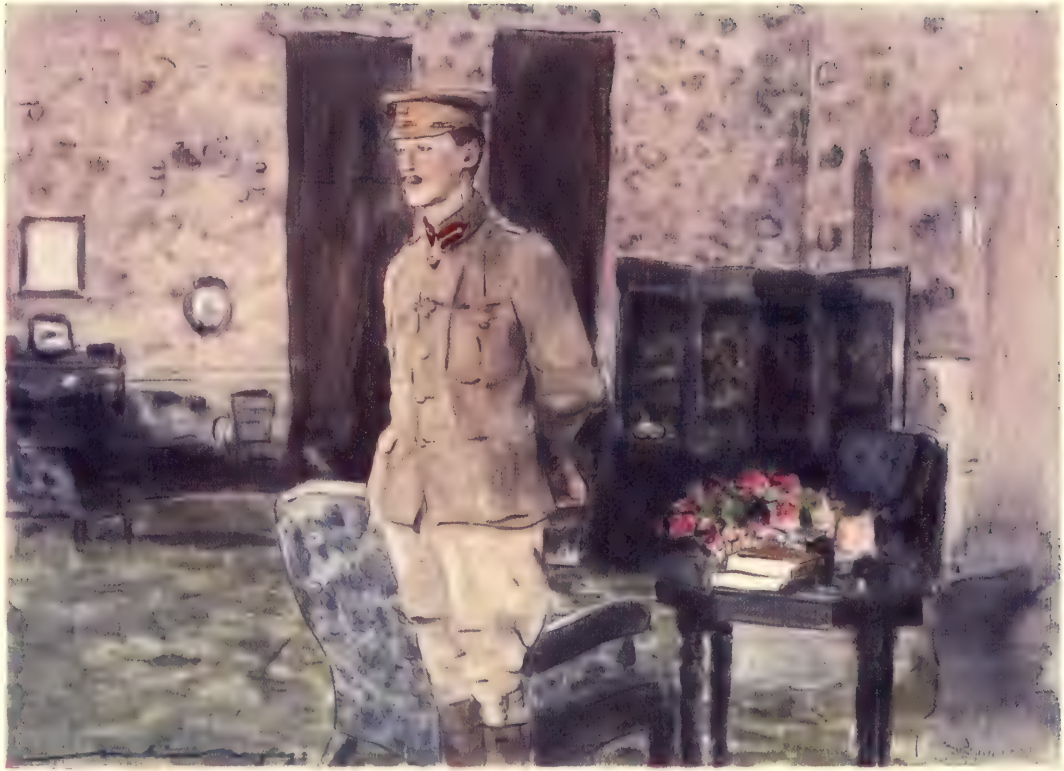
what is fondly supposed to be the most practical nation in the world. This is more especially noticeable in the case of a soldier, who is obviously fettered by a rotten system. It is nothing but drill, drill, drill ; the soldier's individuality is not encouraged ; therefore the man's mind does not grow with his body ; one gleans a very fair illustration of that by examining the contents of Tommy's pockets, which will be found to be precisely what they were ten or fifteen years ago at the board school.

This question of proper education for the soldier is bound to become a very serious one indeed, for we have passed the time when our supremacy on the sea and our superior colonial instinct were our great bulwarks. Now that we are drawn into line with other European Powers in the race for supremacy, now that intelligence, imagination, and the finer qualities in man begin to count as well as mere physical force, we must cultivate these qualities in our men : they must be not mere machines, but real thinking, intelligent persons. Thus we should end in producing still more perfect machines than are at present possible. We have to cope with the Japanese, who, with their background of art and fine intelligence, are far more dangerous than European Powers, and destined to soar right up ahead of us all. There is not a Japanese workman who could not pick to pieces or remake any portion of his rifle if necessary ; yet every Jap is an artist to his finger-tips. It is clear that our soldiers must be trained differently if we

have to contend with such foes. Every man should be taught to educate himself; he should devote his life to soldiering alone, and put as much energy into this one work as a musician or a writer or a painter would put into his. Tommy should be taught to study everything that tends in any way to sharpen his intellectual faculties. For example, I would teach him to make good use of the pencil; in fact, every soldier should be taught to draw, for it helps a man in a thousand different ways. First and foremost it teaches him to be more observant and to use his vision. Take South Africa. Neither Tommy nor his officer would have made half the mistakes he did make if he had had but the crudest knowledge of drawing. Landmarks would have impressed themselves on the soldiers' minds; they would have remembered the placing of one kopje against the other; whole scenes would have been carried away in Tommy's artistic eye, while a slight sketch by his officer would have explained a situation to him in a moment. With this accentuated power of vision, the soldiers would have been less likely to bungle and lose their way, and all this without causing Tommy to drift off into the landscape, there to dream away the hours like a poet; he would be able to see and enjoy Nature as a picture. Now, the Boers, to a certain extent, have this artistic sense born in them naturally; it comes about not through training but through habit. The retina of their eyes through habit is so much more delicate than ours that from a



DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH



distance they can distinguish the colour of a mass of men, and would be able to tell you whether they were Kaffirs or Englishmen in a moment. They would probably not have the intelligence to explain this curious power to you; indeed, they are perhaps totally unaware that they possess it; I daresay that they would be greatly surprised and not a little perturbed to hear that they were past masters of an exact science. But even apart from developing Tommy's finer senses of colour, imagination, and intellect, we want him to be able to do just the common everyday tasks of camp life. We don't want to take into the wilderness an army of helpless babies, badly educated and unfit to work: we want the British soldier to be able to do things. He is an excellent pupil, and quite prepared to learn. For example, cooking, which strikes one as being rather a needful accomplishment, Tommy doesn't understand. He can't light a fire or make a cup of tea for himself; he has not learnt how to adapt Nature to his uses. All this seems to be the very A B C of soldiering; but it is an A B C that the War Office has never condescended to include in its limited curriculum for the soldiers. Whenever we rested for a while on the march, you would see the Kaffirs, who are merely the hangers-on of the army, seated round brilliant fires in the midst of a meal, and the Australians drinking cups of tea, with perhaps a little cake they had baked to eat with it, while poor Tommy would be looking round aimlessly for a bit of wood. Tommy should be able to do all these things, and it is a scandal

that he cannot. He should be taught to prepare a meal at a moment's notice, just as he should be taught to use a map. It seems to be taken for granted that a man can pick up all these things by himself, when he is once in the country ; and in this respect the authorities remind me of the amateur water-colourist who trusts that the blobs and blots on his picture will dry into a masterpiece, and is quite amazed to find, when he looks at his canvas, that the colours have all run into one another, forming terrible confusion.

What impressed me most of all was that Tommy, and occasionally his officer, did not know how to handle his horse. He has a delicate animal to deal with ; yet for all he knows about it, it might be an elephant, or a camel, or even a motor car. It has four legs, yes ; and as a child he may have been taught to say, "The horse is a noble animal, and the friend of man." That is very true ; but Tommy is certainly not a friend of the horse. That is exactly where the Australian scores, or where (to use a racing phrase) "he romps in." He understands his horse to perfection, and knows how to save its energies; above all, he knows how to feed his best-loved companion. It is no unusual thing to see an Australian digging in the apparently fruitless veldt with a penknife. "Just look at that fellow!" shouts Tommy, scornfully. "What does he think he's doing?" Of course it is obvious that the man is searching for little roots and herbs which ease and help his horse.

No reflections on the recent campaign would be



PRINCE FRANCIS OF TECK



complete which did not include the familiar cockney 'bus horse. Never for one moment did this noble animal appear to be at a loss in South Africa; the wide and varied range of his experience—an experience gained on his daily progress between Fulham and the Bank—appeared to have fitted him for contending with the most adverse circumstances. It was perhaps not unnatural that, having cultivated a life-long habit of emulation in the way of racing with his rivals on the Fulham Road, he should have a power of getting over the ground which was not to be equalled by any other four-footed beast upon the veldt. In fact, I may distinctly state that this popular animal was one of the few successes of the present war. He was immeasurably superior to Tommy or the officer, for he was able to draw upon his power of imagination, which assuredly they could never do; and that faculty was developed to such an amazing extent that when he heard the officer's word of command he simply translated it into the old familiar bell and went for all he was worth. It was always a 'bus horse that got in first; in fact, his never-varying superiority over all the other horses quite got on my nerves, and it is obvious that, whoever will be prematurely recalled from these troublous scenes, it will not be the 'bus horse.

Apart from horses, there is an important article that the average British officer and Tommy are appallingly ignorant of, and that is the rifle—the rifle, the soldier's own particular tool, which he should be able to use just as skilfully as Rembrandt handled his

etching needle, or the carpenter his plane and saw. If artisans were to use their tools as our Tommies use their guns, we should not have a house fit to live in. Our whole army is (as it were) composed of uneducated artisans. Again, all the drill that one sees going on, all that fancy work with the decorative general and the review horses, is at times picturesque; but on the whole it is pretty worthless, and does not help the men much when things come to actual warfare. Then, there is the field officer who, anxious to make the little knowledge he possesses apparent to every one, puts his men through certain movements in order to illustrate his own pet theory. He reminds me of the academic painter—a man who is not a true artist at all, but will accentuate the muscles of the figure he is drawing, thinking to air his knowledge of anatomy. Just as the officer spoils a great operation by accentuating one position to show off his superior cleverness, the artist would hopelessly spoil his picture by the same act.

The training of the soldier at home is altogether very bad. He drills part of the day; the rest is spent in drifting up and down the King's Road and into public-houses. I would never blame Tommy on that score, for I have lived with him for months, and I am convinced that he is a splendid fellow; but it is necessary to point out that his training is all made so mechanical and uninteresting that in the end he must degenerate into a machine.

One day, to my surprise, I found myself on the top



SIR ALFRED MILNER INTERVIEWING COLONEL CHOLMONDELEY OF THE C.I.V.



of a kopje viewing a small battle. It struck me that war was quite different from what I had ever imagined it to be. It was reported that some Boers had appeared on the other side of a certain kopje, and had shot a New Zealander. On hearing this, the General immediately sent out a body of volunteers, with orders to dislodge the Boers if they were there. Soon, as I was gazing with the eyes of an outsider at the scene, I was amazed to see these men rush at the kopje, scale it rapidly, and then stand bolt upright for a few moments, while their bodies were outlined clearly and crisply against the sky, before disappearing. Could anything have been madder? The Boers must surely have seen these men on the top of the kopje, and have prepared for them. "Would it not have been better," I gently suggested to the General afterwards, "if the men had crept quietly round the side?" The General paused for a moment, and then said, "Yes: I believe you're perfectly right; but one can never tell." I was not surprised to hear shortly afterwards that this futile action had resulted in a great many lives being lost.

There was another thing that struck me as being strange. I would be marching with the column when a quarter of a mile ahead of us I would see a small body of men. On inquiring who they might be, I was told that they were the eyes of the army: in short, they were scouts. I was amazed: in fact, the only excuse I could find for their close proximity to the army was that the poor men were really afraid of losing their way, and that they did not know the

country any better than the troops themselves. I do not think that the British officer had any idea of scouting, and if there is one thing more important than another in the warfare of the veldt it is scouting. But we were not prepared for the war, and were not even sure of the scouts themselves. I remember talking to General Hector Macdonald on this very subject. In answer to my questions connected with scouts, he said, "I don't get any help at all in that direction. I can't trust the local scouts, and we haven't any of our own. That is the great trouble. It is terribly difficult, scouting, for it requires years and years of practice."

The chief thing our men had to do in South Africa was to march, and they should have been sent out with proper boots. The boots they actually wore were practically composed of brown paper. Now, brown paper is a good thing to wrap up parcels in ; it is also very useful, sometimes, as a blanket ; in fact, it has proved itself a splendid article on innumerable occasions : but it is not a success in the boot. I have seen Tommy crippled and limping on the march to Bloemfontein when by rights he should have been wearing the best shooting boots. Indeed, that would pay in the long run : two pairs would have lasted a man through the whole campaign. As it is, we are on the verge of sending into the battle-field an army of cripples wearing rough coarse boots which render them practically immobile,—to say nothing of the difference a pair of ill-fitting boots makes in the appearance of a man.



NEW ZEALAND MOUNTED RIFLES ACTING AS SCOUTS



Too Formal for Kitchener

DURING a portion of the South African War Lord Kitchener had as an orderly a young scion of a noble house who had joined the Imperial Yeomanry as a trooper. He could not quite understand that he was not on terms of perfect equality with the members of the staff, and having been summoned one morning to carry some dispatches for the Commander-in-Chief he entered the room with a jaunty air.

"Did you want me, Kitchener?" he asked calmly, while the rest of the staff gasped for fear of what would happen next.

Kitchener, however, merely looked at him with a quiet smile. "Oh, don't call me Kitchener," he remarked gently; "it's so beastly formal. Call me Herbert!"

Another thing that appeared to me as foolish beyond words was the manner in which the principle of centralisation was run to death. The British Army in South Africa appeared to be mad on centralisation. There would be hundreds of capable officers spread over the country, men with brains and power to use them ; but, however great the emergency, however trying the difficulty, these men were unable to move hand or foot in the matter until the subject had been placed before the central authorities in the ridiculous red-tape form. This, naturally, often resulted in disaster, almost always in loss of life, and frequently in the destruction of valuable property. Surely common-sense would dictate the wisdom of permitting a certain amount of decentralisation, by which men of capacity might be allowed to act for themselves where immediate action was obviously necessary.

Then, again, together with this fault of what I may term centralisation run mad was the appallingly foolish overloading of the staffs. I remember a friend telling me once that the first thing Lord Kitchener said to him on his arrival in South Africa was, "I wish to goodness I could lighten this staff of mine. I have an overloaded staff, and I could do my work just as well, and, in fact, far better, with two or three wooden chairs, a table, and a couple of capable clerks." Delightfully decorative in a London drawing-room are these staff officers, and not without their uses at Court ; but they are hopelessly out of place—small blame to them, poor men—on the field of battle. Surely it is not preposterously Utopian

to suggest that a more common-sense method should be instituted in that most important branch of military work. A staff officer is a man who should have a life's training; he should know the general's life and habits thoroughly; he cannot be expected to slip into a position purely from decorative reasons at a moment's notice; and thus to do the right thing is not to be expected of him. In any other army than our own the staff officer would be chosen on account of his special aptitude for what should be most arduous and important duties. Nobody can imagine Prince Bismarck, or Count Moltke, or Napoleon, or General Grant, or even one of the great Japanese generals, going into a war without the most accomplished and the most suitable men possible being attached to his staff. The mistake is that in this, as in many other walks in life, petticoat government has held too great a sway; and this has led to more than one disaster during the war.

However, there is no doubt that all this will be changed if we are ever unfortunate enough to find ourselves in any other war.

What an advantage it would have been to our soldiers in South Africa, if they could have had good telescopic sights attached to their rifles! During the Crimean War these valuable instruments were frequently used; yet in South Africa the only guns which had them were those of the Meux Battery, and if I mistake not the idea originated with Lady Meux herself. These guns were perfect in every respect, and did exceptionally fine work.

Reflections on the Campaign

It is to be hoped that we shall not make the terrible error in South Africa of squeezing out the respectable foreigners. The German Emperor has behaved so well towards us that it would surely be a pity to cause a disagreement between him and his own subjects by allowing him to take a step which we ourselves should be to a certain extent justified in taking.

Facsimile Letters

Earl Roberts
Major-General J. D. P. French
Brigadier-General Pole-Carew
Major-General Hector Macdonald
Dr Steinmetz
Major-General Archibald Graham Wavell
Boer Plan of Battle of Magersfontein

R

Army Head Qrs. South Africa.
Johannesburg, 16th Nov: 1900

Dear Mr. Menpes.

I am glad to hear you are going to give the public an opportunity of seeing your "Colour Record" of the War in South Africa. Your illustrated book is sure to be interesting, and I wish it every success

Believe me
yours very truly
Roberts

Nuremberg.
Dec. S. 1900

Dear Mrs. Meyer

Your kind letter
from the South pleases.
You look with me any
interesting and I
shall look forward to
seeing it. Yours very truly

W. H. French M. D.

Welbeck Abbey.
Worksop.

1 April 1901.

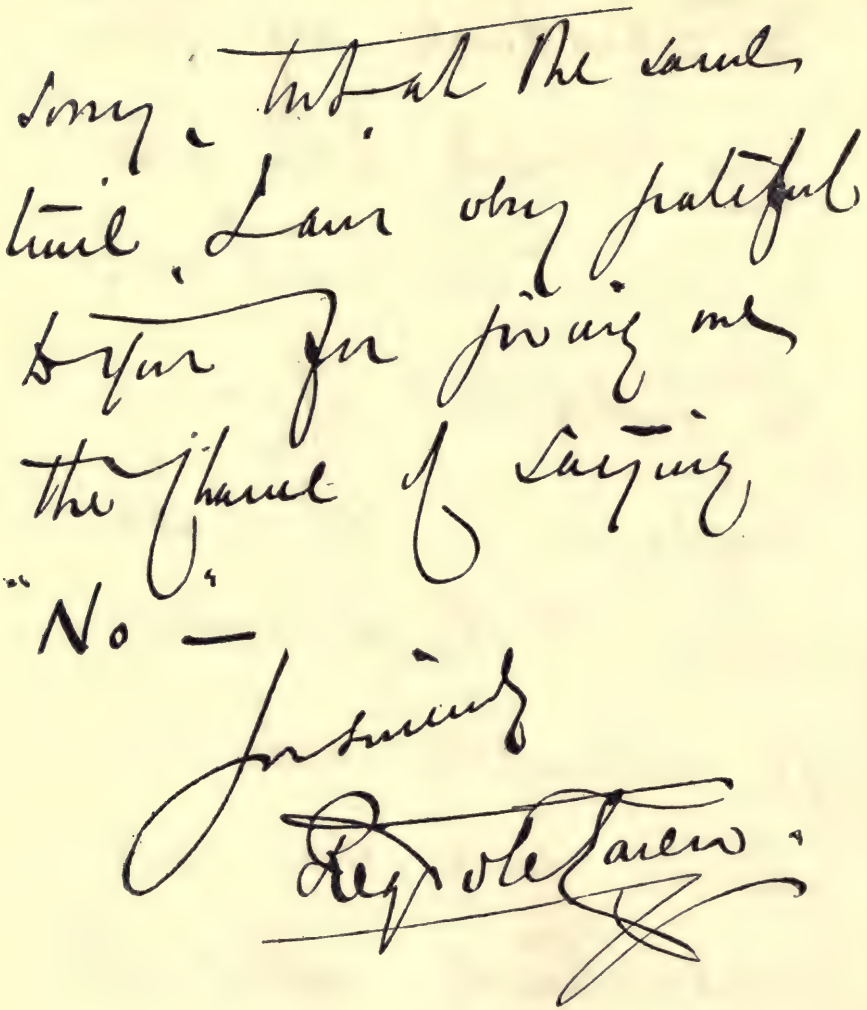
Dear Mr. Hemsley

Although the opinion expressed in my letter of the 16th Nov. last from Lage Inn was what I held strongly at the time, and what I still think was not far wrong — the circumstances

have since so completely changed, that I am afraid I must ask you to refrain from publishing the letter

Whether that opinion was or was not of that time of any value, a different policy has since been carried out — and

to reproduce my letter
now would look like
a desire to parade at
the judgement of my
Superiors — a course
which I think would
be improper, and which
I am sure, you will
understand would be
extremely distasteful
to me — I am very



Springfountain

O.R.C

29 Nov: 1900

Dear Mr Mortimer Menpes

I send you the enclosed

for your edification.

I think the Killing

is just only beginning in

Earnest, on both sides

Yours truly

N.R. Macdonald

Sir, is it true
what the english
papers tell Europe
from you, that
you said to Mr. Abel
Tinker Bleyer „ it was
necessary to murder
the Boers a bit"?
Is it true, Sir? that
you will not only
fight, not only rob,
but murder a people
fighting for its liberty?

We know that you
are thieves of gold
and land, but are
British gentlemen
and generals murde-
rers also.[2]

Had you never a
mother? sir.

Do'nt you respect
anything but your own
purse and that of
your masters[2]

How we detest, how
we execrate you, cruel
tigers. Murderers of the
Kobillas and the Mashonas.
All civilised men hate
you.

Dr. Steinmetz



23-1-'01

Dear Thompson

I have sent you the plan. It was given to me at Laerksdal - shortly after we occupied it in the middle of February. It must have been made soon ~~shortly~~ after the action - and is interesting as it shows the disposition of the Boer forces - Mr Draper Secretary of the Chamber of Mines at Johannesburg - who

was employed as Identification
officer by the late Transvaal
Government. was present
during the fight. I saw
a great deal of him. He
assured me that for time
favored the Boers on that
occasion far more than we
imagine. and that had a
struck the Boer lines very
little nearer the river we
must have carried the position
He told me several times that
the wire entanglements & the
barbs only made effective
attack. It is a matter which
has the greatest interest for
us - although a very melancholy
one - for there I lost many
a friend, brother-officer and

man with whom I had served.
amongst them that most
gallant soldier Franchosse.
no truer friend - no braver
soldier ever lived. He died
as had lived - leading
his men - and setting
us an example of what
a soldier should be. Oh
that his will not have
been thrown away if only
the outcome of this war
is the more serious and
scientific preparation
of the armed forces of
the Country for war and

but for Peace only.

I hope we shall soon meet again and hear a "crack" over our South African experiences.

Yours most truly

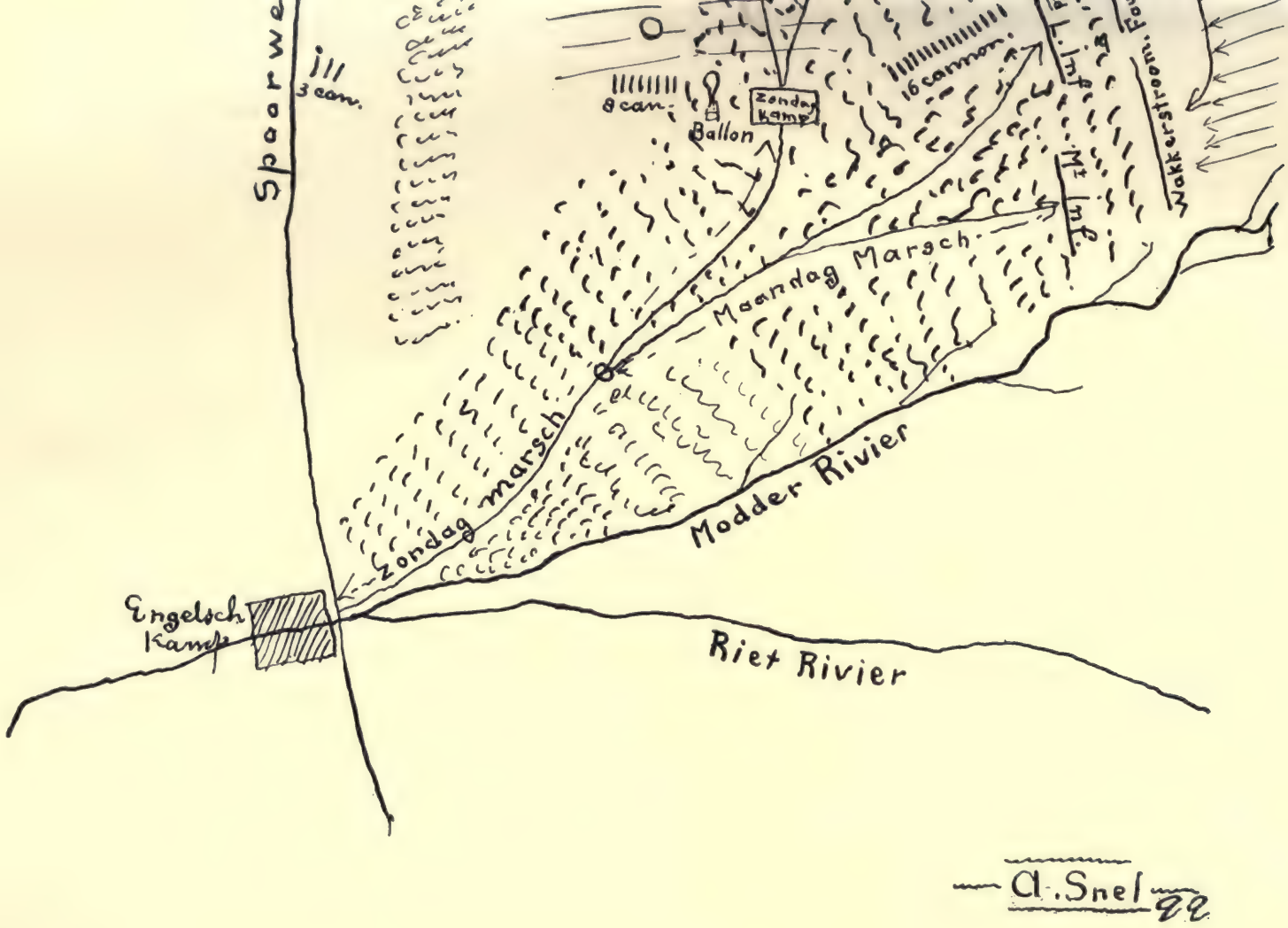
J. Chamberlain.

W. H. v
eige



Dec 11th 1899




Spoorweg
3 cam.
8 cam.
Ballon
Zondag kamp
16 carmon.
L. Inf.
Mt. Inf.
Wakkerstroom
Maandag Marsch
Zondag marsch
Modder Rivier
Engelsch Kamp
Riet Rivier

A. Snel 22

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